

Israel approves construction of 900 more settlement units

TEL AVIV (AP) — Despite a U.S. request for a timeout in Jewish settlement expansion, Israel's government has approved the construction of 900 new units in the Alfei Menashe settlement in the West Bank, its mayor said Monday. The announcement came just one day after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet declared that while it was willing in principle to hand over a part of the West Bank to the Palestinians, it would also "strengthen the Jewish settlements." The 900 new settlement units in Alfei Menashe come in addition to 362 approved last month, said Mayor Shlomo Katan. "I hope that already in the spring we will see the first infrastructure work and levelling of roads on the site," he told Israel Radio. Plans for construction of another 1200 units at Alfei Menashe have been submitted, but are not yet approved, he said.



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Majali, Klima welcome Israeli troop pullout plan if in line with accords

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan and Austria on Monday welcomed an Israeli cabinet decision in principle to withdraw more troops from the West Bank but urged Tel Aviv to do more to honour peace commitments to Palestinians.

"I think it is a positive first step in the right direction and we have to wait and get details on this decision," Austrian Chancellor Viktor Klima said after talks with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali.

"The point that the (Israeli) cabinet has met and decided on the withdrawal is a positive step," added Dr. Majali. "But what size is this withdrawal? We hope it will be within the agreement signed with the Palestinians."

Israeli government on Sunday agreed in principle to hand over more West Bank land to the Palestinians but failed to agree on the size or timetable of the withdrawal and linked the troop pullout to the Palestinians meeting certain conditions.

The Palestinians have dismissed the Israeli plan saying it is aimed at eluding a true withdrawal in accordance with signed interim peace deals.

Mr. Klima, who arrived in Jordan from Damascus on Sunday as part of a regional tour, also met with His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan upon his arrival.

The Crown Prince and Mr. Klima on Monday discussed economic and trade relations between the two countries especially in light of Jordan's recent partnership agreement with the EU.

The Crown Prince accompanied Mr. Klima and his delegation to a visit to Sahab Industrial City (See detailed story on page 8).

Mr. Klima, due to travel to Israel, also urged the Jewish state to abide by its commitments to exchange Arab land for peace and resume peace-making with the Palestinians.

"The land-for-peace is the formula which cannot be changed and we hope that the questions of settlements and further redeployment are handled very soon in an appropriate way by the Israelis," Mr. Klima said.

He said he had agreed with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to support the infrastructure in "Palestine" and to back development plans for an industrial zone and railway networks to give Palestinians "... a signal of hope."



Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali receives Austrian Chancellor Viktor Klima at the Prime Ministry on Monday (Photo by Yousef 'Allan)

Dr. Majali, scheduled to visit the West Bank city of Ramallah on Tuesday, said both Jordan and Austria are set to do their utmost to help revive the stalled six-year-old peace process.

"It must move forward and we have to remove the barriers from its path. The two sides know where these barriers exist and who is blocking the peace

process," added Dr. Majali. He was implicitly referring to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's hardline policies.

Mr. Klima urged Iraq to fulfil its commitments towards the U.N. to help resolve the current crisis and help provide more food

(Continued on page 7)

Iraqis throw stones at U.N. observers; Annan recommends increasing oil revenues to meet Iraq's priority humanitarian requirements

BAGHDAD (R) — Scores of impoverished Iraqis, angry at cuts in food rations, on Monday threw stones at United Nations officials who monitor the arrival of supplies under an oil-for-food deal, a U.N. official said.

Eric Falt, spokesman for Iraq's U.N. relief coordinator, said one of the rocks smashed the back window of a U.N. car, but no one was hurt.

"There is a lot of frustration among the Iraqi people on the delays in the arrival of food and medical shipments under the oil-for-food deal," Mr. Falt told reporters.

Underlining the continuing tension in the Gulf, Kuwait on Monday sounded warning sirens in the first nationwide test of the system since Iraqi troops were driven out in 1991.

Mr. Falt said the U.N. observers, monitoring the distribution of food and medicine arriving in Iraq under the deal, have noticed "growing hostility and anger" at the latest cut in rations.

The government told Iraqis last week that they will not have their full food rations for December. It said the United States obstructed and delayed contracts under the deal.

Under the oil programme

Iraq is allowed partial exports worth \$2 billion each six months aimed at alleviating the hardships caused by U.N. sanctions imposed after the 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The stone throwing took place in Saddam Township in Baghdad, where about one million poor Iraqis live.

Mr. Falt said it was the first incident of its kind during about 240,000 food inspection tours the nearly 200 U.N. food observers have made since the scheme started last December.

"It (incident) appears to be spontaneous. It is a minor incident," he said.

The second phase of the humanitarian scheme expires on Friday.

In New York, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan recommended on Monday increasing the amount of oil Iraq is allowed to sell every six months but proposed no specific figure.

"Given the scale of urgent humanitarian requirements in Iraq, the Security Council may wish to re-examine the adequacy of the revenues as envisaged by Resolutions 986 [1995] and 1111 [1997] and to consider the possibility of increasing those revenue to meet Iraq's priority humani-

tarian requirements," Mr. Annan said in a written report to the council.

Mr. Annan said he was conscious of the extent to which initial hopes concerning the programme had created expectations that were difficult, if not impossible, to meet.

Iraqi Trade Minister Mohammed Mehdi Saleh told Reuters on Sunday that although Iraq wanted a complete lifting of the sanctions,

there was no option but to renew the oil pact.

"Whatever increase takes place on the volume [of the oil-for-food pact] it will not solve the problem," he told Reuters.

"Any increase will not solve the causes of diseases and the essential requirements of the people of Iraq," Mr. Saleh said.

(Continued on page 7)

U.S. officials suspect baby food smuggling ring to Iraq

NEW YORK (AFP) — U.S. customs officials uncovered what they believe is a ring of baby food smugglers who stole powdered milk from supermarkets to sell it at three times the price in Iraq, Newsweek reported.

Thousands of cans of formula were stolen from retail stores in northern Texas over the past two years in what customs officials said was a scheme to sell them for \$40 to \$50 in Iraq, where U.N. sanctions have created a huge black market, the magazine reported in its latest issue.

Small businessmen "of Arabic descent" offered drug addicts \$6 a can to do the stealing, informants told the customs service.

The formula was then reportedly repackaged and shipped to Iraq, the magazine said.

The shoplifters were told that the baby formula could be sold in the Middle East for high profit because Arab baby food plants were destroyed by the U.S. during the 1991 Gulf war, the magazine said.

Majali meets Arafat today to discuss troop withdrawal plan, bilateral ties

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat are scheduled to meet today in the West Bank city of Ramallah to discuss recent developments in the troubled peace process, a government spokesperson said on Monday.

Both men would also look into ways to boost political coordination and assess a recent Israeli cabinet decision to conduct a partial troop withdrawal from rural areas of the West Bank. Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh, who will accompany the Prime Minister, said the talks come "in the framework of bilateral cooperation with our Palestinian brothers." He declined to give further details.

Dr. Majali on Monday

welcomed the Israeli decision but urged Tel Aviv to do more to honour peace commitments to Palestinians.

The Israeli cabinet Sunday agreed in principle on a limited redeployment from the West Bank, but it did not discuss the size of the areas to be handed over and imposed conditions on implementing the move.

Press reports placed the projected withdrawal at six to eight per cent of the West Bank.

The Palestinians have already rejected as inadequate the plan, and said hard-liner Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is trying to avoid a real withdrawal, skipping full implementation of already signed agreements (See story on page 12).

Jordan, home to over 1.2 million U.N.-registered Palestinian refugees, has

supported Palestinian stands and exerted numerous efforts to put the deadlocked peace process back on track.

"We have provided the Palestinian Authority with all our brotherly and sincere support throughout different times and stages," His Majesty King Hussein said in his Speech from the

Throne opening the first ordinary session of the newly-elected Parliament.

"We will continue to support our brothers, today and in the future, towards attaining the Palestinian people's legitimate rights and establishing their independent state on their national soil, with its capital, Jerusalem."

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Chairman of Board of Directors

King marks SOC's first anniversary

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein, the Supreme Commander of the Jordan Armed Forces, Monday attended a ceremony held by the Army's Special Operations Command to mark the first anniversary of its formation and handed the standards to newly formed units.

Upon his arrival, the King was welcomed by HRH Prince Abdullah, Commander of the Special Operations Command, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mirai Kaabneh and senior army officers.

In an address delivered before the King, Prince Abdullah expressed deep pride in his mission as commander, a position

entrusted to him by the King. He said he was honoured with the Royal assignment expressing hope to shoulder the required responsibilities and serve the King and the nation.

King Hussein later handed the standards to the newly formed units. He also presented spears to a number of army officers for their distinguished service within the Command.

Prince Abdullah presented the King with a commemorative gift in observance of the anniversary.

Attending the ceremony were Their Royal Highnesses Prince Rashed, Prince Talal, Princess Rania and Prince Hussein.

Court of Cassation overturns acquittal of Abu Khajil

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Court of Cassation has overturned a Court of Appeals ruling in July to acquit the former Sri Lankan Honorary Consul to Jordan, Tawfiq Abu Khajil, of charges ranging from trafficking babies to forgery of official documents, judicial sources told the Jordan Times yesterday.

In July, of this year, the Court of Appeals acquitted Mr. Abu Khajil of charges of selling one baby, and attempting to sell a second, stating

that no proof existed that the former consul bought or sold any child. "rather what happened was an adoption authorised by Jordanian and Dutch laws."

The Court of Appeals also commuted the forgery charge to a misdemeanor and said that Mr. Abu Khajil did not forge documents, a charge that could send him to three years in jail.

However, the Court of Cassation, presided over by Judge Bassam Newrin, with Judges Mohammad Raqad, Yousef Hmoud, Mashhour Koukh and Kamel Sa'eed, overturned the sentence on the grounds that a 1929 law banning slavery prohibited the sale of babies, the source said.

The court ruled that the law also included provisions that banned any practice that would undermine human freedom whether through treatment of humans as slaves, their deportation or their holding as hostages.

Further, the judicial source said the Higher Court ruled that Mr. Abu Khajil "abused his position, and that the forgery he committed was a crime and not a misdemeanor as the Court of Appeals had ruled."

The Court of Appeals will now review the case. It will either uphold the Higher Court ruling or reject it after which Amman Prosecutor Fou'ad Sweidan, who appealed the verdict, can appeal for a second time to the Court of Cassation, the source told the Jordan Times.

In April of 1997, Mr. Abu Khajil was convicted by the Amman Court of First Instance of selling a baby, trafficking another and of forgery, and sentenced him to three-years with hard labour.

ment of humans as slaves, their deportation or their holding as hostages.

Further, the judicial source said the Higher Court ruled that Mr. Abu Khajil "abused his position, and that the forgery he committed was a crime and not a misdemeanor as the Court of Appeals had ruled."

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In April of 1997, Mr. Abu Khajil was convicted by the Amman Court of First Instance of selling a baby, trafficking another and of forgery, and sentenced him to three-years with hard labour.

Mr. Abu Khajil was formally charged in March 1996 with 36 counts of forging documents, usage of forged documents, 36 counts of infant trafficking, possession of unlicensed firearms, import of an illegal wireless radio, abuse of trust and forgery of a government seal.

He was arrested shortly after airport police stopped a Dutch couple on March 13, 1996, while leaving the country with a child they had adopted after paying a sum of \$8,000.

Police also found forged adoption documents with the couple.

Mr. Abu Khajil, who was freed on bail, is currently being tried at the Criminal Court on charges of raping four Sri Lankan women.

All four women are themselves facing charges of perjury, after they changed their initial testimonies.

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Yemeni foreign minister meets King Fahd for border talks

RIYADH (AFP) — Yemeni Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Iryani has met King Fahd for talks on the demarcation of the border, where at least two people died in a clash earlier this month, officials said Monday.

They said Mr. Iryani also held a separate meeting overnight with his Saudi counterpart, Prince Nayef Ben Abdul Aziz, who is in charge of the border file for the kingdom, the official news agency SPA said.

Mr. Iryani, accompanied by Interior Minister Hussein Arab, arrived in Riyadh on Sunday.

The Yemeni official, who delivered a message from President Ali Abdullah Saleh to King Fahd, aims "to add the final touches to the accord on demarcating the border," according to a Yemeni diplomatic source.

The two countries have been negotiating the demarcation of their 2,500-kilometre border for the past two

years, after an accord in which Yemen dropped its claims to Najran, Assir and Jizan provinces.

Two Yemenis were killed and four wounded in a clash between Saudi and Yemeni border patrols on Nov. 17, an authoritative source said in Sanaa on Saturday.

The source said the two countries had "contained" the incident and that it would not affect their relations.

The clash took place inside Yemeni territory after a Saudi

flag was raised over a school in the village of Qarqahi, 300 kilometres north of Sanaa, he said. All the casualties were Yemenis.

But Al Riyadh newspaper said the village was inside Saudi territory.

A Yemeni soldier lowered the Saudi flag over the school and was shot down by the school guard, it said. Other Yemeni troops returned fire, killing two Saudi civilians and wounding three others.



The mother of an Islamist cries outside a state security court after hearing the death sentence pass on her son Monday. The court sentenced two out of the five suspects found guilty of killing a policeman and wounding another to death and the rest to life imprisonment (Reuters photo)

Hitchhiking Israeli soldier fearing kidnap, dies jumping from car

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Israeli soldier who mistakely feared she was being kidnapped by an Islamist who had picked her up after hitchhiking died after jumping from the man's vehicle, the Yediot Aharonot newspaper reported Monday.

Ravital Dundaker, 20, and a second female soldier were picked up last week while hitchhiking in the Negev Desert by a man driving an Israeli-registered utility truck.

The women were riding in an enclosed compartment separated from the driver and when he failed to stop at their agreed destination, Dundaker and her companion feared they were being kidnapped and jumped from the vehicle, the newspaper said.

Dundaker landed on her head and died Sunday after four days in hospital. The second woman, who was slightly injured, recounted the incident to police.

The army has issued numerous warnings in recent days over purported

plans by Islamists to kidnap Israeli soldiers, notably in the run-up to the 10th anniversary on Dec. 9 of the start of the 1987-1994 Palestinian "Intifada" uprising against Israeli occupation.

According to the Yediot Aharonot, the two women pounded on the window of the driver's compartment when he failed to stop at their destination, but he apparently did not hear them because of loud music playing on the radio.

Panicked, they opened the rear door of the vehicle and jumped out.

Following the kidnapping and murder of an Israeli soldier by Islamists early this year, the army issued strict instructions concerning hitchhiking.

Male soldiers must be armed to hitchhike alone, and only during the daytime, and can only hitchhike at night in pairs.

Female soldiers are told to only hitchhike during daylight hours and in pairs.

Egypt's mufti endorses death penalty against 2 Gamaa activists

CAIRO (AFP) — The mufti of Egypt on Monday approved a death penalty against two convicted militants of the outlawed Gamaa Islamiyya, in a step paving the way for their execution, a senior judge said.

Judge Ahmad Baddur, who heads the high state security court, had initially sentenced to death Mohammad Fathi Abdul Azim, 27, and Mahmoud Mustafa Suleiman, 24, on Nov. 3, on charges of murdering a policeman in 1993.

But under Egyptian law, the mufti, the country's top religious leader, must endorse death penalties to pave the way for the execution of con-

victs unless President Hosni Mubarak decides to pardon them.

Abdul Azim and Suleiman were acquitted by the high state security court in October 1994 after witnesses said they were not involved in the murder but the sentence was never nullified and a new trial opened in May.

Also on Monday, the high state security court sentenced to life in prison two other militant activists who were accused of involvement in the 1993 murder of a policeman.

"For them Islam is not, as they pretend, a solution to the country's but a way of reaching power," Mr. Baddur said

as he announced the verdict against Sayyed Maqbul and Ali Ahmad Ali.

The Gamaa is Egypt's main armed Islamist group and has spearheaded anti-government violence which has claimed 1,333 lives since March 1992.

A total of 98 Islamist activists have been sentenced to death since March 1992, including 61 who have been executed.

The Gamaa claimed responsibility for the massacre of 58 holidaymakers in the southern archaeological town of Luxor in Nov. 17 and warned further attacks unless the authorities stopped fighting them.

The "Battalions of Destruction," a sub-group of the Gamaa, had said in a leaflet found at the site of the massacre that the operation was linked to the opening Nov. 17 of another trial involving Islamist activists.

The chief suspect in that trial is Mustafa Hamza, the fugitive leader of the Gamaa's military wing who is also the key suspect in a foiled bid to kill President Mubarak in 1995 in Ethiopia.

Hamza has been sentenced to death in absentia in 1992 and in 1993.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Turkish militiamen kill minibus passenger

ANKARA (R) — Two members of a state-paid anti-Kurdish rebel militia in Turkey opened fire on a civilian minibus, killing one of the passengers, a spokesman for the Erzurum governor's office said on Monday. He said the "village guard" militiamen fired on the vehicle with automatic weapons near Yikilgan village in eastern Erzurum province, killing one passenger and wounding three others. The two militiamen and the minibus driver were detained by police, the spokesman said. Turkey employs around 60,000 village guards in the east and southeast of the country in its fight against the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK). Village guards are often accused of using government arms to conduct private vendettas and blood feuds. More than 27,000 people have been killed during the PKK's 13-year struggle for self-rule in the mainly Kurdish southeast.

Egypt militants getting funds from Gulf

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Egypt's ambassador to Kuwait said Monday that some sections of society in Gulf states are helping to finance Islamists in Egypt. "There are some terrorists being financed by some circles in the Gulf states," Mustafa Abu Shenief told the Kuwaiti daily Al Rai Al Aam, without elaborating. Egypt is trying to ensure that governments block any support for Islamists, while President Hosni Mubarak has accused Britain of "protecting terrorists" by granting political asylum. The drive follows an attack by Islamists on Nov. 17 that killed 58 holidaymakers outside an ancient temple in Luxor, southern Egypt. "Our eyes and ears must be open to the fact that terrorism does not have a country. It is an international phenomenon and all parties must cooperate to confront it," the ambassador said. In 1994, Cairo expressed concern that funds were being sent by Gulf charities to outlawed groups in Egypt. But Kuwait has since taken measures to ensure that funds go through official channels only, diplomats said.

'Luxor assailants were shot to death'

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt's police coroner said on Monday that six Islamists who massacred 58 holidaymakers in Luxor last month were shot to death by police, dismissing press reports they had committed suicide. "The assailants were killed by three to seven bullets fired at them from a distance of more than 50 centimetres," a police source said quoting the coroner's report. "The bullets were fired from several directions and there is no indication whatsoever that the shots were fired from a close distance, which rules out any suicide," the report said. "The cartridges [found near the bodies] were fired from police weapons," the report added. "This evidence totally rules out the rumour, carried by some opposition newspapers, according to which the Islamists making their getaway committed suicide when they were pursued by the police in caves," it said.

Argentine minister meets Israeli counterpart

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Argentine Defence Minister Jorge Dominguez held talks here Monday with Israeli counterpart Yitzhak Mordechai on the second day of his visit to Israel, an Israeli defence ministry spokesman said. Mr. Dominguez, who is accompanied by a number of senior Argentine officers, also met with the director general of Israel's defence ministry, Ilan Biran. Officials from both sides discussed the strategic threats facing Israel, in particular from non-conventional weapons and from Iran, said the sources. Mr. Dominguez arrived Sunday on a six-day trip and is scheduled to visit military bases and arms factories during his stay.

Israel to accept more Palestinians to replace foreign labourers

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israel plans to open its borders next month to thousands more Palestinian workers to replace foreign labourers who represent a "social time bomb" for Israel, officials said Monday.

The number of entry permits issued to labourers from the West Bank and Gaza Strip will increase from 52,000 to almost 140,000 within five years to take the place of the foreigners, said Shlomo Dror, a military spokesman.

The first phase of the plan drawn up by the labour and social affairs ministry will be implemented next month with the return home of 7,000 foreign workers and the issue of 6,000 additional passes for Palestinians, said Moshe Dimri, director of labour services at the ministry.

One thousand Israelis will also gain jobs in the switch-over, he

said. "This will begin taking effect in January and will be the first part of several phases to reduce the number of foreign workers... who are in the long-term a social time bomb for Israel," Mr. Dimri told AFP Monday.

The larger inter-ministerial plan entails cutting the number of work permits available for foreigners from 90,000 to 5,000 within five years, Mr. Dror said.

Due to frequent border closures imposed on the occupied territories following Palestinian attacks in Israel, Israeli employers have shifted in recent years from Palestinian labourers to a reliance on foreign workers, mostly Romanians, Thais and Filipinos.

As a result the number of foreigners working in Israel, notably in the construction and farm sectors, has ballooned from

just several thousand in 1990 to more than 300,000, most of them illegal, officials said.

In 1997 alone, Israel clamped four full closures on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, each lasting for at least two weeks, before they were gradually eased and then usually reimposed.

But authorities say the foreign labourers carry with them a slew of social ills like crime and prostitution.

"This government prefers Palestinian workers because they are our neighbours and they finish a day of work and go home to sleep," Mr. Dimri said.

Israeli officials have also expressed worry that the foreigners, who are mainly Christians, are intermarrying with Jewish women.

In response to these concerns, the labour and defence ministries announced last month they

would within weeks begin allowing at least 30,000 carefully selected Palestinians to work in the country during security alerts, Mr. Dror said.

Officials and workers' rights activists warned that the government's labour plan could run into stiff resistance from employers who have become accustomed to the inexpensive foreign workers.

"A Thai is cheaper and works harder than a Palestinian even under horrible living conditions," Mr. Dror said. "Six, of course, they make more profits with foreign workers."

"But our considerations are for the nation, for security and for peace," Mr. Dror added. "If we have to, we will impose steep fines on those who hire foreign workers illegally."

Hanna Zohar, coordinator of the Worker's Hotline for foreign and Palestinian labourers, said

that without close government scrutiny, Israeli employers would simply continue using foreign workers illegally since they pay them half the salaries of Palestinians and only two thirds of the minimum wage.

"The black market could grow because of this policy," she told AFP.

"This plan is not realistic as long as the government doesn't make the employers pay the foreign workers as much as the Palestinians. The employers have gotten used to paying slave salaries," she said.

"The foreign workers are not a social time bomb," Ms. Zohar added.

"The problem is an Israeli society that is unwilling to accept foreign workers... The government propaganda [against them] causes racism."

JORDAN TELEVISION

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PROGRAMME TWO
14:10 Sandokan
14:30 C.R.O.
15:00 Skippy
15:30 The Album Show
16:30 Square One T.V.
17:00 French Programmes
19:00 News in French
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 You Bet Your Life
20:00 Doc. — Skeleton Coast
20:30 Encounter
21:10 Hollywood Remembers
22:00 News in English
22:30 Margaret Volant
23:15 Drama — Scarlet and Black

PRAYER TIMES

04:52 Fajr
06:14 (Sunrise) Duha
11:25 Dhuhur
14:13 'Asr
16:36 Maghreb
17:58 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church
Tel. 632785.

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel.
661757.
Terra Sancta Church Tel.
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Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church
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771751.
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Tel. 5516245
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Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel.
654932.
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675691.
The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.
614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department
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Sunny and warm weather condi-

tions will prevail with temperatures higher than average by four degrees centigrade and winds southwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman 08/21
Aqaba 14/25
Deserts 06/22
Jordan Valley 15/24

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 19, Aqaba 25 Humidity
readings: Amman 41 per
cent, Aqaba 30 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Walid Al Masri 675485
Dr. Youssef Rashid 875792
Dr. Jum'a Abu Dhiab 738848
Dr. Khalid Jbali 740740
Ferdows pharmacy 773336
Al Asena pharmacy 677055
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmebsani pharmacy 637669
Nairoukh pharmacy 625672

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qam 281484
Al Quds pharmacy 1
ZARQA:
Dr. Walid Halaseh 987793
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Dept. 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 100
Rescue Police P.O. 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896391
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897407
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs

661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 0853200
Queen Alia Int'l Airport 0853200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381332
Khalidi Maternity 64428136
Akileh Maternity 64244102
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine Shmebsani 647071
Shmebsani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 815845
Al-Muasher Hospital 6672769
The Islamic, Abdali 66612637
Al-Ahli, Abdali 66416406
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 77710173
Al-Bashir 77511126
Army, Marka 89161115
Queen Alia Hospital 60224050
Amal Hospital 674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital 09983323
Zarqa National Hospital 14235
Ibn Sina Hospital 09986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital 09990991

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital 02275555
Greek Catholic Hospital 02272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital 02247100

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:15 Sanaa (RJ)
07:25 Damascus (RJ)
09:25 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:05 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:15 Beirut (RJ)
10:20 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
16:20 Cairo (RJ)
17:15 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:30 London, Frankfurt (RJ)

02:30 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
05:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
Other Flights
14:35 Istanbul (TK)
14:40 Munich (YP)
16:30 Rome (AZ)
18:30 Dubai, Damascus (EK)
20:00 Tel Aviv (LY)
20:10 Beirut (ME)
20:40 Cairo (MS)
22:20 London (BA)
23:35 Amsterdam (KL)
23:35 Larnaca (CY)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
07:45 Aqaba (RW)
09:05 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
09:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:20 Tel Aviv (RW)
18:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:20 Aqaba (RW)
22:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:20 Beirut (RJ)
08:25 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:00 Brussels, London (RJ)

11:25 Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
12:00 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:10 Paris (RJ)
12:30 Cairo (RJ)
19:30 Jeddah (RJ)
20:20 Larnaca (RJ)
20:40 Damascus (RJ)
21:00 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
21:30 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
23:59 Jeddah (add) (RJ)
06:30 Kuala Lumpur, Jeddah (RJ)

Other Flights
02:25 Amsterdam (KL)
03:00 Athens (OA)
15:40 Munich (YP)
15:45 Istanbul (TK)
17:30 Rome (AZ)
19:30 Dubai (EK)
21:20 Tel Aviv (LY)
21:40 Cairo (MS)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
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17:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
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WHAT'S
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CHRISTMAS CHOIR
Annual YWCA Christ
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Friday, Thursd
day, and Sunday
14th, 15th and 7th Dec.
at the Royal Cultural
Centre at 8 p.m.
EXHIBITIONS
Painting (abstract) art by
Esmat Ghabrial at
Royal Cultural Centre,
Jalal, Dec. 7.
Paints by Ghada Dah
dah at Baladna Art
Gallery, Gardens Street
Tel. 5579598, until Dec.
Paintings on fine
canvas at the Arts and
Crafts Centre (Artisanat)
Tel. 6171118 until Dec. 2.
Paintings by Ammar
Jabbar at the French
Cultural Centre, Jalal
Street, until Dec. 12.
Painting by Sadi Al-
Jabbar at Orient Gallery
Tel. 6519341, until Dec.
Works by Khalid
Jabbar at Instituto Cer
amics, Jalal Amman,
Dec. 10.

Committee members to be elected in second session of Parliament

By Fairouz Abu-Ghazaleh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — During its second session Wednesday morning, the Lower House is scheduled to elect members to its 14 permanent committees. Lower House Secretary General Mohammad Masalha said Monday.

The government submitted six draft laws to the Lower House, which the House will refer to its per-

manent committees once they are formed.

These laws include the Election Law, Press and Publication Law, which was passed by the government as a temporary law in May, a protocol agreement between Jordan and France, the Securities Law, an agreement for oil exploration between the Natural Resource Authority and a foreign firm, and a draft law regulating the work of

the Economic and Social Organisation for Retired Servicemen.

The 80-member House will form several committees that will investigate claims by ten parties contesting the validity of certain deputies' elections.

A special committee to draft the House's reply to the King's Speech from the Throne is expected to present the related proposals to the House early next week.

Women in media conclude seminar on professional rights

By a Jordan Times
Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Around 20 women working in the media sector Monday concluded a three-day seminar organised by the Jordan Women's Union (JWU) that aimed at raising their professional rights.

JWU member Noor Imam said the seminar was important for women in the media in light of the amendments introduced by the government to the 1993 Press and Publications Law.

The controversial amendments, introduced in May, increased the minimum capital requirements for daily and weekly newspapers, toughened sanctions for reporters and editors found in violation of the law, and narrowed the range of issues able to be reported, editorialised, or

analysed by journalists.

The amendments, which have been criticised by international press freedom groups as lowering the ceiling of public freedoms in the Kingdom, resulted in the closure of 13 of the country's 20 weeklies.

Ms. Imam, an attorney in practice, stated that the participants were also introduced to other laws that discriminate against women, the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, and other laws pertaining to their fields.

JWU Vice President Nadia Shamroukh said this workshop was part of the union's legal literacy programme for women, which was inaugurated five years ago.

These programmes, she maintained, are designed to introduce women to their legal rights and the laws

that discriminate against them, as well as launch campaigns calling for the termination or amendment of discriminatory laws.

Participants reviewed nine working papers tackling issues such as "Women and Crimes," presented by Attorney Zahra Sharabati, "The Civil Status Law," presented by Atty. Sa'oudah Salem, "The Nationality and Passports Law," presented by Atty. Muna Zaghabah, "The Labour and Social Security Law," prepared by Atty. Sana Khayat, and "The Constitutional and Civil Rights of Women," presented by Atty. Ghousoun Rahal.

Established in 1974, the JWU is a non-governmental organisation that aims at playing an active role in improving the status of Jordanian women and in promoting their rights within the Kingdom.

Declaration on formation of children's rights group expected next week

By Hind-Lara Mango
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A declaration on the formation of the National Coalition for Children (NCC) is expected to be announced at a one-day workshop on Dec. 8 in Amman.

"The declaration will be just the beginning for future development and cooperation with the National Task Force for Children (NTFC), hopefully leading to the creation of an NCC charter," said In'am Mufti, special advisor to Her Majesty Queen Noor.

The NCC, one unit within the NTFC, is a voluntary association encompassing 162 members of Jordanian public and private national organisations, international agencies, and individuals and families working for the well-being of children.

The NTFC is a coordi-

nating agency of Jordan's national effort for the survival, protection, and development of the rights of children.

"It is hoped that this declaration will pave the way for the development of the NCC into a charter," Mrs. Mufti told an informal gathering of media representatives.

According to Ra'ida Kutub, deputy coordinator and programme officer at the NTFC, the main aim of the NCC is to coordinate, facilitate, initiate, and sustain the development of "high-quality activities targeting children and enabling them to attain their rights."

There are specific objectives put forth by coalition members such as monitoring and ensuring the implementation of the U.N. Conventions on the Rights of the Child, the Arab Charter for Children, and all national action

plans. Programmes promoting the awareness of children's issues will be another task for the NCC, as well as devising projects to enhance children's rights and their well-being. Dr. Kutub told the Jordan Times.

Following the declaration, the NCC will formulate specialised groups to work on priority areas for children in Jordan. The NTFC has been holding a series of meetings with different groups to identify priority areas pertaining to children's issues.

Three priority areas were distinguished: pre-school education, child rights, and the enhancement of the home and school environment. Dr. Kutub stated.

On the same day, Nabil 'Amari, secretary general at the Ministry of Planning, will speak on the situation of children in Jordan.

Delays in implementation of peace accords will harm Jordanian-Israeli ties — Mutawi

ABU DHABI (Petra) —

The Jordanian government is making every effort and exploring every potential to support the Palestinian-Israeli peace process and overcome the obstacles placed by Israel in the path of peace, Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutawi said Monday.

In an interview published by the Abu Dhabi newspaper Al Itihad, Dr. Mutawi said due to the strong and distinguished historical links between the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples, it is natural that any developments west of the Jordan River have an impact on the Kingdom.

"Any delays in the implementation of the Palestinian-Israeli peace accords inevitably affect Jordan's ties with Israel," he stated.

Jordan believes in the continuation of dialogue and further moves towards peace, because otherwise there will be a deadlock and no progress, a situation that is unacceptable at the Arab or the international levels.

he added.

Stating that Jordan's views on the peace process have been in conflict with those of Israel since Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu came to power, Dr. Mutawi added "however, we are exerting all possible efforts to remove the obstacles preventing the implementation of the accords, as well as other obstacles, like the obstruction of the flow of Jordanian goods to the Palestine self-rule areas in the West Bank."

On Jordanian-Egyptian coordination in these matters, the minister said Jordan considers Egypt's role as very important, especially in backing the Palestinians and "we are working in conjunction with Egypt to help the Palestinians overcome every obstacle."

When asked about the benefits that Jordan might have gained from attending the Middle East and North Africa economic conference in Doha, the minister replied that "by deciding to attend

the Doha meeting, Jordan was not hoping to launch contacts with the Israelis, as such contacts are available to us because Jordan and Israel have signed a peace treaty and subsequent agreements. Rather, we viewed the Doha meeting as an international event through which we could enhance our contacts with international organisations in economic and trade fields to conclude investment accords."

On the upcoming Islamic nations summit in Tehran later this month, the minister said "the important thing at this stage is bringing the views of various Islamic nations closer together and collaborating to change the distorted image about Islam as propagated in the West."

Jordan will focus the conference's attention on achieving closer cooperation between Islamic nations to solve issues marring inter-Islamic relations, he said.

The subject of Jerusalem will dominate the delibera-

tions, especially as Israel has not yet displayed any good intentions towards a lasting peace and has not taken any measures to halt the construction of Jewish settlements on Arab lands, according to Dr. Mutawi.

On the situation in Iraq, the minister said "we are trying to focus world attention on the humanitarian element rather than the political aspect alone in a bid to end the suffering of the Iraqi people. We have resorted to all diplomatic channels to seek an end to the present crisis."

"I believe that Iraq has to implement the U.N. Security Council's resolutions to convince the world community of its stand and trigger world campaigns to lift the embargo," he added.

With regard to Syria, the minister said Jordan is engaging in quiet but intensive diplomacy to restore momentum to Syrian-Jordanian relations.

"In recent telephone conversations, the prime ministers of the two countries dis-

cussed prospects for the resumption of the Joint Higher Jordanian-Syrian Committee, which we hope will convene soon," according to Dr. Mutawi.

Attempts are also under way to improve Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations, he said.

"The Gulf crisis has its adverse impact on Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations but Jordan for its part remains committed to the overall Arab stand and seeks to solve problems within the Arab World," the minister said.

Through its endeavours, Jordan has succeeded in starting the process of rebuilding these relations, he said, noting that air transport has been restored and officials from the two countries have held several meetings and the contacts are continuing.

Despite the differences in views, the Kuwaiti embassy in Amman is still open and it is hoped that Jordan's embassy will re-open in the Kuwaiti capital, according to Dr. Mutawi.

Students continue strike for fifth day

AMMAN (J.T.) — Students from Amman Polytechnic Faculty, a subsidiary of Balqa Applied Sciences University, are continuing their strike in protest against what they describe as the university administration's procrastination in responding to their requests for improved services, study plans, and the approval of a students' union.

A spokesperson for the students, who Monday observed their strike for the fifth consecutive day, said they were boycotting classes and refraining from paying college fees until their demands have been met.

Despite the fact that the administration has responded to some demands, such as making available a doctor and a clinic to be opened within two weeks, and despite promises that warnings issued to student committee members who have been negotiating with the administration can be cancelled, the students consider the administration's disregard of their request to create a students' union as the main demand that should be met, he said.

Otherwise the strike will continue, he added. The spokesperson made the remarks following a meeting with the administration, during which the students' grievances and requests reportedly were discussed.

Faculty Dean Mohammad Alia said the university is now involved in issuing internal regulations and student regulations similar to those at other Jordanian universities.

For his part, Balqa Applied Science University President Khaled Touqan said the university believes in and supports the students' request to be involved in the university administration's decision-making process.

However, the process of organising a students' union requires new laws and special regulations, which will take time to work out, he said, adding that he is willing to open a dialogue with the students' committee.

But he stressed that demagoguery and chaos do not achieve anything except wasting the students' time and preventing them from progressing in their studies. Dr. Touqan called on the students to give sufficient time to the administration to work out regulations intended to meet their demands.

The students should not violate university regulations, but rather should attend classes and refrain from disrupting the educational process and damaging the image of the university, Dr. Touqan added.

Police arrest three youths accused of raping, killing 9-year-old in Jerash

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Police have arrested three school drop-outs after they allegedly raped and strangled a nine-year-old school girl in Jerash, according to police officials.

The three, all aged 16, took turns raping the girl Saturday in a deserted house in the northern Greco-Roman city, they added.

"The three boys told the interrogators that they sexually assaulted the girl," one official told the Jordan Times.

"But investigations are still under way to determine who killed her, as each one is claiming that his friend was the one to do so."

The three were sitting in a forest area making tea when they spotted the girl as she returned home from school at around 2:00 p.m., the officials said.

"The youths forced her into a deserted house, pinned her to the floor, and took turns raping her while she screamed for help," the police official said.

The youths gagged the child with a piece of cloth and later decided to silence her, according to the officials. "They wrapped her school dress belt around her neck and then fed the scene," one official added.

Police captured the youths six hours after the crime. "We received several tips from people who informed us that they saw the three youths sitting near the forest area, shortly before the girl was reported missing," one said.

"Others also informed us that the youths used to frequently stop by the deserted house."

"We are still questioning the minors to determine who killed her, and then we are going to transfer them to the juvenile court," a police official said.

The minors have insisted that the rape was not premeditated, he said.

A nine-year-old girl was raped in a similar incident at Zarqa camp in February 1995. She was raped, sodomised, and later strangled by a 47-year-old taxi driver. The man was convicted by the Criminal Court and executed in December of the same year.

Regional seminar opens today to promote women's role in small business enterprises

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Her Majesty Queen Noor today will open a regional seminar on micro and small enterprises to help improve the lot of women in the Arab World.

The seminar aims at promoting women's economic activities and invigorating the role of governmental and non-governmental organisations in the development of small business enterprises.

"We aim at changing women's attitudes towards small businesses, and our biggest challenge is to create a pioneer spirit among women and to support them to take the initiative to start their own business," said Sima Bahous, Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) development specialist.

Dr. Bahous, who was

speaking at a press conference, said the workshop aims at reconsidering all the current micro-businesses owned by women and creating new programmes to guarantee continuous success for women entrepreneurs on the national and international level.

Further, Dr. Bahous said one of the main aims of the conference is to push for changing the expected role of women within their own societies and encourage them to start their own profitable business.

Director of Women's Projects at the NHF, Hind Abdul Jabbar, added that the workshop is also designed to highlight the importance of Arab women's participation in the economic development of their own countries through the creation of new work opportunities with a view to

helping them cope with new developments in the region.

Further, Ms. Abdul Jabbar, who is also the president of the Business and Professional Women's Club, added that it seeks to encourage exchanging experiences in the field of micro and small business enterprises, establishing communication networks, and initiating dialogue among the various parties involved in the development of such undertakings.

The three-day seminar is co-sponsored by the NHF and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and will be attended by delegates from 11 Arab countries representing governmental and non-governmental organisations involved in small enterprise promotion.

The countries are Bahrain, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar,

Syria, Tunisia, Yemen, and Jordan.

The countries' delegates will be divided into three working groups and will discuss issues such as linking micro-enterprises with women's needs, intervention aimed at promoting the development of small and micro enterprises, different experience of women entrepreneurs and donor agencies, training, credit, marketing, and other supportive services.

According to ILO Women's Projects Director Mary Qawar, her organisation will submit a preliminary project to examine the kinds of micro-business that women can adopt.

"The aim is to fight poverty and to increase women's participation in the market force," Dr. Qawar said.

Play exploring societal identity issues opens next week

AMMAN (J.T.) — Under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor, the Noor Al Hussein Foundation Performing Arts Centre in cooperation with the British Council is presenting a play entitled "The Moment" from Dec. 7-11 at the Royal Cultural Centre.

"The Moment" deals with the problems, challenges, and decisions youth face during the process of becoming adults, according to the producers of the play. Personal and social identity in a rapidly-changing world and the effects of these changes in Arab society are also explored.

Although the play is targets an adult audience, "The Moment" is suitable for students aged 15 and over. During the student performances, the actors will interact with the audi-



The cast of the play 'The Moment'

ence to deal with these issues.

Two performances are

scheduled per day, in the morning at 10 a.m. and in the evening at 7 p.m.

For more information, contact the Noor Al Hussein Foundation.

WHAT'S GOING ON

CHRISTMAS CHOIR

* Annual YWCA Christmas classical choir on Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday (3rd, 4th, 6th and 7th Dec. '97) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Plastic (abstract) art by Mohammad Qaddumi at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Dec. 7.

* Works by Ghada Dahdaleh at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until Dec. 10.

* Paintings on fine porcelain at the Arts and Crafts Centre (Artisana) (Tel. 617118) until Dec. 2.

* Paintings by Ammar Khammash at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until Dec. 12.

* Paintings by Saadi Al-Kaabi at Orient Gallery (Tel. 681303/4), until Dec. 4.

* Works by Khalid Khreis at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, until Dec. 10.

NEWS IN BRIEF

King congratulates UAE president on national day

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Monday sent a cable to United Arab Emirates (UAE) President Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, congratulating him on his country's national day. The King wished Sheikh Zayed continued good health and happiness and UAE citizens further progress and prosperity.

Arab Thought Forum to open symposium here next week

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, president of the Arab Thought Forum (ATF), next Saturday will chair a symposium on role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Europe and the Arab World in developing civil societies. Participants in the two-day symposium, organised by the ATF and the Bruno Kreisky Forum, will discuss several work-

ing papers covering, among other topics, the historical analysis of the meaning of civil society, the role of NGOs in Europe and the Arab World, the political, cultural, and social trends prevailing in the two regions, and globalisation. Taking part in the symposium will be Arab and European intellectuals.

Prince Mohammad visits Special Forces Command

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Prince Mohammad, the personal representative of His Majesty King Hussein, Monday visited the Royal Special Forces Command, where he was received by HRH Prince Abdullah, commander of the Special Operations forces, and listened to a briefing on the duties of the forces and their training activities. Prince Mohammad also visited a paratrooper unit and watched a demonstration in basic skills and Tae Kwon Do.

Europe, U.S. in heated war of words at climate conference

KYOTO, Japan (AFP) — The United States and Europe locked horns here Monday as a U.N. climate conference aimed at imposing legally-binding cuts on global greenhouse gas emissions descended into a slanging match on its first day.

At the opening session of the 10-day conference, the U.S. launched an attack on a bid by the European Union to be treated as one country for any targets, a so-called "bubble."

Melinda Kimble, U.S. acting assistant secretary of state, raised "strong concerns" about the proposal, insisting the EU explain why it should be allowed to share the burden among its members while opposing the trading of emission quotas elsewhere in the world.

The EU must also explain how enlargement would affect its target and why it "should not take on a more ambitious target in light of its unique economic advantage under the bubble," Ms. Kimble said.

She was speaking to delegates from around 150 nations gathered at the ancient capital of Kyoto for the so-called third session of the conference of the parties which seeks to ease the threat of global warming.

But the issue is deeply divisive in the developed world, with little consensus on how far to cut output of greenhouse gases, which gases should be included and the U.S. insistence that developing nations shoulder some of the burden.

EU delegates voiced shock at the U.S. attack, saying they had come to the meeting in a constructive spirit and would not be dragged into a slanging match.

"1997 will be the hottest year on record ever and we think that considerable, measurable and ambitious reduction targets are necessary if we want to really achieve a reduction on greenhouse gas emissions," said Pierre Gramegna, EU ambassador of Luxembourg.

What counted was a reduction in emissions, but "unfortunately ... we had the impression that some participants were trying to antagonise positions instead of trying to bring them close," he added.

He said the idea of the EU being treated as "a bubble" had never been criticised in the past.

Japanese Foreign Minister Keizo Obuchi reminded delegates why they had gathered, saying the Kyoto conference was a crucial opportunity for the world to combat global warming in the new millennium. "People all over the world are holding their

breath to watch every action which we are making in this conference hall."

Given the widely differing postures of participants, "this 10-day conference will be days of difficult negotiations," the Foreign Minister said.

But the minister warned the opening session that "unless we start our efforts now, we cannot hand over this beautiful earth to future generations."

Earlier the United States had announced it was prepared to budge on its insistence that the developed world set a single target for cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

Many countries, such as resource-rich Australia which relies heavily on fossil fuels, have called for reduction targets to take into account their different circumstances.

"We have long advocated a flat rate target" for developed countries, said Ms. Kimble, arguing it was fair and easier to negotiate.

But aware of the sharp split among nations over targets, "we are prepared to consider the possibility of limited, carefully-bound differentiation."

The United States is the world's biggest source of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, accounting for 22-to-23 per cent of the emissions blamed for trapping the earth's heat.

According to U.N. estimates, current trends in emissions of greenhouse gases are likely to cause average global temperatures to rise 1.0-to-3.5 degrees Celsius over the next 100 years.

Japanese Environment Agency Director General Hiroshi Oki, who took over as president of the conference, said developing countries' emissions would surpass those of the developed world in the decade after 2010.

"Only a fully worldwide strategy can effectively address the problems of climate change," Mr. Oki said.

But he called for developed countries to take the lead by making commitments at Kyoto while developing nations pursue their "common but differentiated responsibilities."

Rich countries should also aid the poor in cutting emissions, Mr. Oki said.

Taking 1990 greenhouse gas emissions as a base, Europe is calling for a 15 per cent cut by 2010, Japan for a five per cent cut between 2008 and 2012 and the United States for no change between 2008 and 2012.

But each of the offers has a different underlying basis. The United States, for example, includes six "greenhouse gases" in its proposal while Europe and Japan include only three.

Australian opposition calls for greenhouse emission targets

SYDNEY (AFP) — The Labour opposition joined international critics of Australia's policy on greenhouse gas emissions Monday, urging the government to consider future generations and come up with a realistic emissions target.

As the U.N. climate conference opened in Kyoto, Japan, with hopes of achieving international agreement on reduced emissions, opposition leader Kim Beazley warned Australia has a serious problem in being the odd man out.

Prime Minister John Howard's government has consistently rejected calls to match a European Union target of a 15 per cent cut in emissions by 2010 and is pressing instead for levels based on each country's individual trade and economic circumstances.

Mr. Beazley told reporters there were great differences between countries involved with the Kyoto climate change summit in Japan.

"But there is one clear underpinning line that is emerging around the globe, virtually everywhere except in the soul of this government," he said.

"We actually have a serious problem to deal with here," Mr. Beazley said Australia would have to set some sort of emission target or a process which would ultimately lead to one.

"We owe it to future generations, we owe it indeed to our own comfortable survival on this planet, that we address the problem," he said.

"There is no question at all that the right treatment of this issue actually produces jobs, doesn't lose them."

"I just hope the prime minister ultimately can accept that fact."

Virtually isolated among Western industrialised nations, Australia argues that as an energy-exporting nation, any binding treaty that prevented it from increasing gases would be disproportionately harmful and bring "enormous economic costs."

As well as Europe, Japan and the United States are both proposing cuts, or at least a stabilisation of emissions at 1990 levels by 2010.

A survey of 2,000 voters suggested the government has little public support in Australia for its position, with 90 per cent expressing concern about global warming.

Two-thirds said Mr. Howard should sign an international treaty to cut greenhouse pollution, even if taking action will hurt the economy.

Chinese dissidents renew calls for free speech

BEIJING (AFP) — Chinese dissidents Monday renewed calls for political change, which have been proliferating since the country's top dissident, Wei Jingsheng, was released two weeks ago.

Veteran Chinese activist Qin Yongmin issued a fax declaration urging President Jiang Zemin to go a step further on his weekend remarks in Canada on freedoms of expression.

At an Ottawa press conference Friday, Mr. Jiang said the Chinese constitution guarantees freedom of speech but the situation is different if there are "attempts to create chaos or to put the government in danger."

But the Wuhan-based dissident said in a fax statement seen here Monday: "The key point is not what the constitution stipulates but whether the government can protect such rights."

Describing himself as an elected "spokesman for China's dissidents," Mr. Qin urged the country's parliament to pass new laws specifically protecting rights of peaceful demonstration and urged the government to stop suppressing protests by laid-off workers.

He also called for overseas dissidents, including activists in Hong Kong and Taiwan, to be allowed to participate in the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference

— a large representative body aimed at soliciting public opinion on government policy.

On a conciliatory note, Mr. Qin suggested dissidents hold a temporary moratorium on protests so as to "decrease the burden of the Communist Party government."

A lack of confrontational politics would ease the government's transition to a regime respecting human rights, he said.

Mr. Qin cautiously praised a series of statements Mr. Jiang has made on human rights since the death of Patriarch Deng Xiaoping in February, saying the president's comments in Canada were of "real significance."

In Ottawa, Mr. Jiang said China "accepts the general principles of personal freedoms" but that "particular conditions" apply to individual countries and should be taken into account.

Separately, Anhui province dissident Wang Hongxue sent a petition to the president demanding an official reevaluation of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, freedom of speech and the release of all political prisoners — including 1989 student leader Wang Dan.

"Our country has made many great mistakes due to lack of political democracy," he said in the petition, read to AFP by telephone from Bengbu city.

Mr. Wang — a 37-year-old textile worker in east-

ern Anhui province and former soldier — said democracy was the only solution to China's serious corruption problem.

The 1989 demonstrations have been officially branded a "turmoil" instigated by a small group of counter-revolutionaries seeking to overthrow the government.

Mr. Qin, 44, began his career as an activist during the 1978-79 Democracy Wall movement. He spent eight years in jail in the 1980s for "counter-revolution" and another two years behind bars for co-authoring a document called a "Peace Charter" in 1993 with other dissidents.

He has been particularly active recently, issuing two other open letters since China's most prominent political prisoner, Wei Jingsheng, was released from prison on medical parole on Nov. 16.

The long-time dissident vowed last week to continue to write to Mr. Jiang regularly "until the day when I and people I represent obtain the freedom of speech, press and assembly."

But he has denied he wants Communist Party rule replaced with Western-style multiparty democracy, saying: "It is necessary for stability and the happiness of the people that the party remain in power for some time to come."

Italy government candidate wins Genoa mayor race

ROME (R) — The candidate backed by Italy's centre-left government won a second-round mayoral race in Genoa while candidates of the centre-right opposition won in two smaller southern cities, according to final results Monday.

In Genoa, the largest of the five key cities involved in Sunday's local run-offs, centre-left candidate Giuseppe Penzo won 51.5 per cent, ahead of Sergio Castellani, the candidate of a local party, who won 48.5 per cent.

Centre-right Freedom Alliance candidates won in the smaller southern cities of Caserta in the Campania region and in Vibo Valentia in the southern Calabria region.

Candidates for the separatist Northern League won in the northern cities of Varese and Alessandria.

The results involved balloting in cities where no one won in the first round two weeks ago.

In the first round of separate voting for mayors in Sicily Sunday, centre-left candidates were seen winning sweeping victories in two key cities.



Japan's Environment Agency chief Hiroshi Oki addresses the plenary session opening of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change upon election as president of the conference in Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan (Renter photo)

Supporters of deposed Cambodian prince return

PHNOM PENH (R) — An advance team of supporters of deposed co-Premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh arrived back in Cambodia Monday and called for the prince's unconditional return to take part in election.

The nine-member opposition team, including one member of parliament from the prince's FUNCINPEC Party, arrived in Phnom Penh on a flight from Bangkok Monday and called for the prince's unconditional return to take part in election.

The prince's team, which included Cambodia's ambassador to the United Nations, Prince Sisowath Sirirath, also planned to hold talks with Hun Sen and other government leaders.

Political analysts said the opposition team's return was another step towards the recognition and legitimisation of Hun Sen's new government.

"It's a winning move for Hun Sen," said one analyst, who declined to be identified.

"These people are coming back under the assumption that everything is OK here," he said.

"It's a definite recognition of the legitimacy of the current government by the opposition and the international community, particularly the United Nations."

The U.N. secretary-general's representative in Cambodia, Lakshmi Mehta, who was at Phnom Penh airport to greet the returnees, said the team would attend a briefing with U.N. staff at a Phnom Penh hotel later Monday.

The United Nations is providing the prince's supporters with security monitors, but U.N. officials said the government was responsible for their safety.

At least 43 of Prince Ranariddh's supporters, most of them military and intelligence officials, were killed following his ouster.

A senior U.N. human rights official said Sunday the government's failure to investigate human rights abuses, including the execution of the 43 royalists, had raised doubts over the likelihood of free and fair elections next year.

The team will stay for 10 days and will be joined by at least 16 other opposition supporters who missed the

flight from Bangkok Monday morning due to last minute technical problems.

They will assess the security situation and see if conditions are in place to ensure a free and fair election, members said.

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Wind, lightning worsen Australian bushfires

SYDNEY (AFP) — Some 3,000 firefighters battled to contain more than 170 bushfires across Australia's New South Wales state Monday and fresh reinforcements had to be called in from neighbouring Queensland, officials said.

Lightning strikes were believed responsible for most of the 90 new fires which flared during the weekend almost as quickly as the firefighters doused others and prayed for rain or kinder weather.

Aerial reconnaissance spotted the new fires Monday morning, with most burning in rugged and remote country, but some threatening forests and farmland.

One fire closed a major highway near Coonabarabran, in the state's northwest, and was threatening Australian dollars 40 million (\$27 million) worth of forest timber and endangered species, a Rural Fire Service spokesman said.

Authorities have warned that 70,000 volunteers were

likely to be needed during the summer, already showing signs of being one of the hottest on record with conditions ripe for a repeat of the 1994 bushfires.

Those blazes were the worst in New South Wales for a century.

Soldiers were called in Sunday to reinforce 3,000 weary firefighters backed up with 30 fire-bombing helicopters and five fixed-wing aircraft.

Another 25 volunteer firefighters with 10 fire vehicles were scheduled to leave Queensland Monday to join 33 Queensland volunteers already in New South Wales with 14 firetrucks and support vehicles.

A high to very high fire danger warning has been issued for most of New South Wales Monday.

An 23-year-old female firefighter who fractured her leg fighting fires in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney late Sunday had to be winched to safety with two paramedics Monday morning.

Australian PM challenges foes in aboriginal land row

CANBERRA (R) — Australian Prime Minister John Howard Monday urged his political foes to back his planned aboriginal land rights reforms to safeguard suburban homes from native land claims.

Mr. Howard is seeking to push his widely criticised law — aimed at ending a land row between farmers and aborigines — through parliament by Christmas to get the divisive issue off the political agenda as his government struggles to rebuild support.

As parliament's upper house, the senate, continued debate on the land law Monday, Mr. Howard warned the Labour Party was jeopardising the security of suburban homes by opposing key parts of the legislation.

"I want the Australian Labour Party to explain to the Australian people why are you trying to destroy a clause that will confirm the safety of freehold," Mr. Howard told parliament.

His liberal-national government has said private ownership of land by ordinary Australians can only be guaranteed by the law amending native title.

Critics, accusing Mr. Howard of scaremongering, say this is wrong. They argue court rulings have already rejected any suggestion aborigines could claim homeowners' land.

Mr. Howard Sunday made his first address to the nation since winning power 20 months ago to plead for public support, saying dragging out the divisive debate would help no one.

"The sooner we get this

debate over and get the whole issue behind us, the better for all of us," he said in the nationally broadcast speech.

Opposition leader Kim Beazley was due to respond late Monday night.

Mr. Howard has come under fire from all sides over his plan, which is aimed at giving aborigines a guaranteed right to some pastoral leases, but restricts their ability to make claims.

Aborigines say it strips them of their land rights. Farmers say it takes away their control over how they use their land by giving aborigines too much say.

Mr. Howard has threatened an early election over the issue, which has split the community, pitted the government against church leaders and sparked allegations of racism.

The next election, due by mid-1999, is expected late next year. But Mr. Howard can call an early election if the senate, where he does not have a majority, twice rejects the proposed law.

After a historic landslide win over Labour last year, Mr. Howard's coalition has seen its support slump to a 12-year low and it now trails Labour by about seven percentage points.

Key independent Senator Brian Harradine, whose vote is likely to decide the fate of Mr. Howard's plan, said it had to be amended to make it fair for farmers and aborigines.

Mr. Harradine, from the conservative island state of Tasmania, said he was particularly concerned by the deadline of 2003 set by the bill for native title claims.

Reno will not seek outside counsel for Clinton, Gore

WASHINGTON (R) — Attorney General Janet Reno will not seek the appointment of an independent counsel to investigate fund-raising calls by President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore, Justice Department officials said Sunday.

They said Ms. Reno's decision, which had been widely expected, could be conveyed as early as Monday to a special three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals. Under the independent counsel law, Ms. Reno must act no later than Tuesday.

They said Ms. Reno also will not seek an independent counsel to investigate allegations that then-energy secretary Hazel O'Leary illegally solicited a charitable contribution from Democratic fund-raiser Johnny Chang in return for a meeting with Chinese officials.

Ms. Reno met Sunday with top Justice Department officials, including Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder and the head of a task force investigating campaign fund-raising violations, to review the final legal submissions, the officials said.

"This meeting was not unexpected. It's pretty much pro forma," one official said. "It's all teed up and ready to go. Why wait until Tuesday? I anticipate no reason to drag this out further."

But another official cautioned that there was "no guarantee" Ms. Reno would act Monday and said Tuesday might be more likely. "She often has more questions," he added.

Mr. Gore has acknowledged making more than 40 telephone calls seeking campaign contributions from his White House office. Mr. Clinton has said he does not recall dialling

for dollars, but has not ruled out making such calls.

Task force prosecutors and top Reno aides have recommended against seeking an independent counsel for the Clinton-Gore calls.

They said the 114-year-old law at issue that bars solicitation of campaign contributions on federal government property has never been applied to phone calls seeking contributions from private citizens who were not on federal property.

On the O'Leary allegations, one official said: "The facts don't support the appointment of an independent counsel."

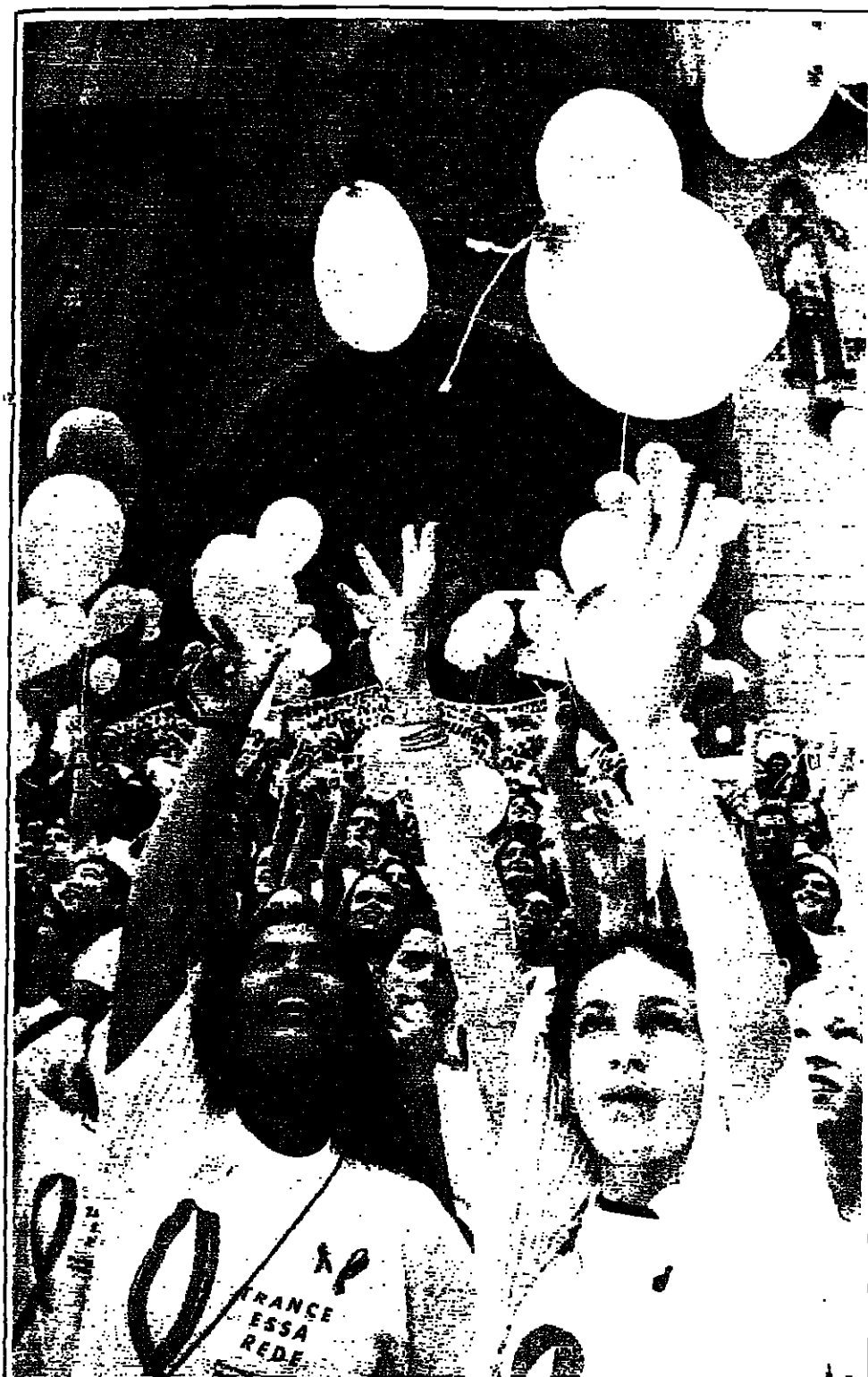
Ms. Reno's expected move has outraged Republicans in Congress, who have demanded that she name an independent counsel to investigate the campaign fund-raising controversy involving Mr. Clinton and the Democratic Party before the 1996 election.

Sen. Arlen Specter, a Republican from Pennsylvania, wrote to Ms. Reno last week, saying that her focus only on the Clinton-Gore phone calls was too narrow.

Sen. Specter urged the appointment of an outside counsel to look at broader fund-raising allegations that the Democrats conspired to evade spending limits in Clinton's reelection campaign.

Ms. Reno returned to the Justice Department for the Thanksgiving holiday in Miami, resting up from a trip to Mexico during which she became ill.

Ms. Reno fainted at a reception Tuesday night, was admitted to a hospital in Mexico City overnight. She was diagnosed with gallstones and fatigue before cutting short her Mexican trip Wednesday and flying to Florida.



AIDS DAY: Public school students release balloons to mark the 10th International AIDS Day on Monday in front of the Sao Paulo Cathedral. Local health authorities report that 40,000 of Brazil's 104,000 recorded AIDS cases can be found in Sao Paulo (AFP photo)

Russian government faces tough week amid economic woes

MOSCOW (R) — Russia's reformist government faces a potentially make-or-break week with the threat of a cabinet reshuffle hanging over it and the shaky economy under pressure.

President Boris Yeltsin said Sunday he was putting off for a week to 10 days a meeting at which his government must account for its much-criticised economic performance to him. The meeting had been due to take place Monday.

The delay could just prolong the agony for ministers in the firing line over the government's economic record. A debate on the draft 1998 budget in the opposition-dominated lower house of parliament Friday could be decisive in the battle to survive.

"It's all in the president's hands," First Deputy Prime Minister Boris Nemtsov said in a television interview broadcast Sunday.

He said the day Mr. Yeltsin hears the government's report would be a "fateful day," but expressed faith that he would stick to the course of reforms even if he changes his line-up.

"I don't think the president's

mood is so variable that every few months he takes a decision to do something completely contradictory (to what he has been doing before)," Mr. Nemtsov said.

The Kremlin cited Friday's budget debate in the state Duma lower chamber, which could pose the government with another tussle with opposition deputies, as one of the reasons why Mr. Yeltsin has put off hearing the government defend its record.

The opposition Communists, the largest group in the Duma, have repeatedly withheld their backing for the spending plan to press demands for concessions from Mr. Yeltsin.

The Duma's budget committee has recommended passing the budget, but deputies are not obliged to do as it says and the opposition's resistance already means the plan is unlikely to be in force by the start of next year.

That would not be a disaster but it would be another bump on the road to turning round the economy, which is feeling the squeeze after a retreat by foreign investors worried by the turmoil on global financial

markets.

The government is battling low tax revenues and has had to delay lucrative tenders of stakes in state oil companies, making it harder to wipe out wage arrears to millions of public sector workers, such as teachers and doctors, by Jan. 1.

Mr. Yeltsin, deeply concerned, quizzed German Chancellor Helmut Kohl Sunday about the prospects of Moscow receiving new financial assistance from abroad.

The chancellor, who had more than four hours of talks with Mr. Yeltsin in a hunting lodge in a snow-covered wood near Moscow, promised to raise the issue with other world leaders.

"After my return to Bonn, I will consult the German government and also other countries," Mr. Kohl told reporters before flying home after spending the afternoon in Russia.

Russian officials have had talks in Washington on Moscow's financial problems but U.S. officials have said they had no information about reports that Russia is seeking extra funding.

Asian healthworkers lament lack of progress on World AIDS Day

HONG KONG (AFP) — Asia has failed to take note of the spiralling increase in HIV infections, health workers across the region warned Monday, as they tried to increase public awareness of the deadly virus on World AIDS Day.

With estimates of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infections in Asia ranging from less than five million to 10 million, and the number of victims forecast to more than double by the turn of the century in many countries, healthworkers say Asia could take over from Africa as the world's AIDS hotspot.

While Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) was initially seen as a scourge for the homosexual community elsewhere in the world as it spread in the early 1980s, heterosexual acts account for the majority of transmissions in Asia.

Poor blood screening and the use of shared needles — by cash-strapped hospitals as well as drug users — have also contributed to the growing menace, as has homosexual activity.

But it is the booming vice industry in many parts of

Asia and pride-driven refusal by men to wear condoms that has most fuelled the spread of HIV, the healthworkers say.

After sleeping with prostitutes and becoming infected themselves, the men then create a third tier of infection by passing the virus to their regular partners and a fourth tier when the women transmit it to their children.

"A lot of people know they should use condoms, but in real life situations they feel using condoms will make them have less sexual satisfaction," said Lorena Wong, of Hong Kong community group AIDS Concern, speaking after distributing condoms on the streets here Monday.

"A lot of people, especially women, were picking up safe sex leaflets and then putting them back, saying they don't need them."

"A lot of women find it difficult to ask husbands to use condoms, because the husbands feel they are not trusted."

Government statistics show only 907 reported cases of HIV and AIDS here, including some 200 people who have died, but

Ms. Wong said the true figure was probably more than 3,000.

In India, infection is under one per cent of the total adult population, but that still means somewhere between three and five million people, making India the country with the largest number of people with HIV in the world.

At the end of 1996, China estimated up to 200,000 people had HIV or AIDS, though healthworkers say that figure may have doubled by now.

In Beijing Monday, Chinese and Hong Kong AIDS workers arrived at the main railway station to complete their distribution of tens of thousands of leaflets on the fatal virus up and down the country.

Helped by hordes of Beijing health workers dressed in white coats and caps, the team of 14 handed out brightly coloured leaflets to bemused travellers, many of whom were attracted solely by the commotion.

"I really don't know much about this AIDS disease. I just took the leaflet because it looked nice," said Zhang Aihong, returning to her village in Anhui

on an early afternoon train.

"AIDS? Is this about AIDS? I really don't have anything to say about that," said a business traveller heading for the central city of Changsha.

"Generally speaking most people in Beijing are aware of the disease, and they are scared of it, but do not have any detailed knowledge," said Shen Zhaoying, an official from the Beijing Office to Prevent Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

"But out in the countryside, knowledge is very patchy."

Cambodia has been identified as one of the countries likely to be worst hit by HIV and AIDS and 40 per cent of prostitutes there already carry the virus, according to U.N. health officials.

Cambodia has the fastest growing rate of HIV infections in Asia, with up to 120,000 people or more than one per cent of the 10 million population carrying the virus and the figure is expected reach 500,000 to one million by 2006.

Up to six per cent of pregnant women are infected, as are six per cent of police and seven per cent of soldiers.

diers.

Vietnam and Burma are also seeing a rapid spread of HIV but Thailand has notably reduced the rate of new infections among sexworkers and their clients, which account for the majority of the country's estimated 750,000 HIV and AIDS cases.

Rallies, marches and education campaigns were to be held across Asia Monday to increase awareness about HIV and AIDS. Meanwhile, as the campaign to prevent new infections goes on, scientists say they are getting closer to finding a cure.

Thailand has approved human trials of a possible AIDS vaccine which targets strains of the HIV virus common in the country, and is now locally producing drugs which stall the advance of the disease.

Chinese herbalists have also launched a fresh assault on the AIDS epidemic, pinning many of their hopes on licorice as a cure.

The most effective recipe found there to date combines licorice, Chinese angelica, milkvetch and bupleurum.

Kinshasa shuts down FM international radio relays

KINSHASA (R) — The Democratic Republic of Congo accused foreign broadcasters Sunday of purposely tarnishing its image and said all local FM transmissions of international radio stations would be shut down as of midnight.

In a meeting with the foreign press in Kinshasa, Information Minister Raphael Ghenda accused the international media of campaigning against President Laurent Kabila's government and of spreading disharmony

among the Congolese people. "As of midnight tonight all FM relays of international radios will be closed down. If international radios are relaying false information it is our duty to stop them operating," he said.

"I think there is a conscious will to paint our country in the most sombre light, to spread disinformation which is intended to harm and to divide the Congolese people," he added.

Radio France Internationale (RFI), the British Broadcast-

ing Corp (BBC) and the Voice of America (VOA) all transmit news broadcasts in FM in Kinshasa via private local radio stations.

BBC is also relayed in the eastern jungle town of Kisangani, and RFI in Goma, the provincial capital of North Kivu. German radio has been negotiating to open FM transmissions.

The crackdown follows coverage last Friday of clashes between different factions of the new Congo army outside the presidency and elsewhere in Kinshasa.

Mr. Ghenda also accused the international media of wilfully playing up the importance of the arrest last week of Masasu Nindanga, Mr. Kabila's security adviser. Mr. Masasu was widely known as army chief and was a co-founder of Mr. Kabila's AFDL movement that toppled ex-Zaire's veteran dictator Mobutu Sese Seko in May.

Mr. Ghenda repeated a presidency statement Saturday which said Mr. Masasu was

never a general or army chief. He said there would be no other measures to restrict press freedoms but called on journalists to use their "liberty with responsibility."

He went on to say that the local press in Kinshasa was delinquent and frequently guilty of defamation and slander.

"We could have shut down many newspapers and imprisoned journalists for defamation, but we have stuck to our policy to allow freedom of expression."

'Vitamin could attack brain disease'

WASHINGTON (R) — Researchers said Sunday they had found a way to sneak vitamin C past the so-called blood-brain barrier, the gatekeeper that protects the brain from infection.

They said if their method worked in people, it could offer a new approach to treating Alzheimer's disease and other diseases that come from damage to brain cells.

This is because vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant, working to prevent the damage caused by everyday life, damage that leads to diseases such as cancer, heart disease and even Alzheimer's.

"We now know how to get large amounts of an antioxidant into the brain," Dr. David Agus, a cancer specialist at memo-

rial Sloan-Kettering Centre in New York, said in a statement.

Some recent studies have shown that vitamin E, another strong antioxidant, can work against Alzheimer's.

In April a team at New York's Columbia University found that both vitamin E and the anti-Parkinson's drug Selegiline appeared to delay for six to seven months the milestones of the disease, such as required institutionalisation, inability to perform basic activities of living, severe dementia and death.

Vitamin C might be another candidate for helping prevent cell damage, but when people take vitamin C orally, most of it is lost in the urine and wasted, because it dissolves in water.

Dr. Agus' team looked at

how vitamin C gets into the brain naturally. Reporting in the Journal of Clinical Investigation, it said it had found that cells could break the vitamin down into ascorbic acid and dehydroascorbic acid.

Cells use vitamin C in the form of ascorbic acid. The researchers injected mice with both forms, killed them and looked at their brains. They found that the mice injected with dehydroascorbic acid had more ascorbic acid in their brain cells afterwards.

"Our findings from this study have therapeutic implications, because we can potentially increase vitamin C concentrations in the brain by increasing the blood level of dehydroascorbic acid," Dr. David Golde, who also worked on the study, said.

Indian ruling coalition demands fresh elections

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's ruling coalition, which lost the support of a key ally three days ago, Monday demanded general elections to end the political deadlock.

"An immediate election will be in the best interest of the country," The Pioneer newspaper quoted United Front coalition convenor N. Chandrababu Naidu as saying.

Mr. Naidu said in the southern city of Hyderabad that the coalition, which resigned Friday but was asked by the country's president to carry on, was disappointed with the Congress 1 Party for withdrawing its backing to the seven-month government of Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral.

"This repeated ditching and the politics of blackmail by the Congress has become intolerable for us. It had to end somewhere," he said.

The Congress had brought down a previous minority

United Front coalition government in April before extending renewed support to Mr. Gujral.

The Congress toppled the Gujral government after accusing a coalition member of having links with Tamil guerrillas from Sri Lanka blamed for former Premier Rajiv Gandhi's 1991 assassination.

The Congress staked a claim to form a new coalition after Mr. Gujral resigned but party officials admit it has not succeeded in gathering the necessary support to cobble together a stable government.

The Congress has 140 members in the 545-seat parliament. No party is in a position to form a government of its own. Hindu nationalists command 162 members, and the United Front around 180 seats.

Indian President K.R. Narayanan is expected to decide soon whether to call for new elections or the formation of a new coalition.

Rights group wants new probe on Indonesia killings

JAKARTA (R) — A U.S.-based human rights group called Monday for an independent investigation into violence in Indonesia earlier this year during which it said 500 people were killed, some beheaded and some victims of cannibalism.

New York-based Human Rights Watch said in its report "Communal violence in West Kalimantan" that clashes between local Dayak people and immigrants from the island of Madura from December 1996 to March 1997 were some of the worst such outbreaks in Indonesia in decades.

"In the aftermath of a fight between Dayak and Madurese youths in a town

called Sanggau Ledo, in which two Dayaks youths were stabbed, the Dayaks waged what appeared to be ritual war against Madurese communities, burning houses, killing inhabitants, and in some cases severing the heads and eating the livers of those killed," it said.

"The death toll was probably about 500 by the time the killing ceased. Appallingly high but still much lower than some early estimates of 2,000 or more," the report concluded after two visits to the province in January and July this year.

"The Indonesian government has discouraged any effort to determine an accurate count," it said.

Thai elephants find friend in politics

BANGKOK (AFP) — A Thai MP has vowed to help save the country's endangered elephants by closing a legal loophole which has allowed smugglers to register the docile animals as beasts of burden, a report said Monday.

MP Kanchana Silpa-Archa said she would lobby companies such as Siam Cement, Carlsberg Beer and Chang Beer, which use elephants as marketing logos, to help fund a rehabilitation centre for old and sick pachyderms.

The MP, who is the daughter of a former premier, wants protection extended to all elephants in order to stop smugglers capturing wild elephants and registering them as domestic animals. The Nation newspaper reported.

Under Thai law, elephants are protected unless they are

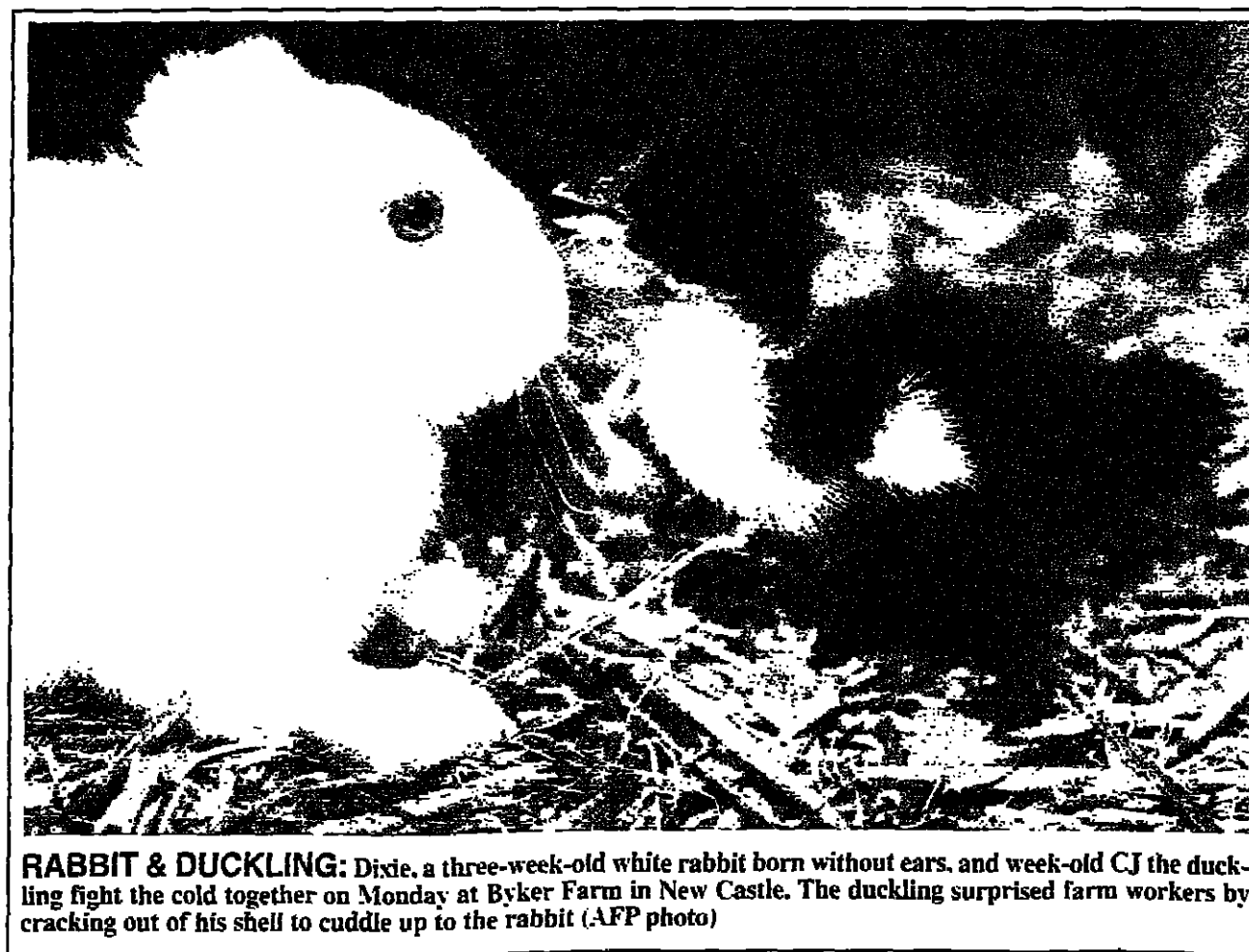
born in captivity, in which case they can be registered as beasts of burden.

Although many Thais revere elephants as sacred, they are often used to labour in difficult terrain and sometimes fed amphetamines to increase their work rate.

Ms. Kanchana said Asian elephants were in danger of becoming extinct in the wild within 20 years.

Conservationists estimate there are only 1,900 wild elephants left in Thailand, where their natural habitats are under threat from encroachment by farmers and development, while there are an estimated 3,500 domesticated pachyderms.

Elephants were traditionally used as working animals by farmers, but are increasingly taken by their handlers to tread the streets of cities as tourist attractions and curios.



RABBIT & DUCKLING: Dixie, a three-week-old white rabbit born without ears, and week-old CJ the duckling fight the cold together on Monday at Byker Farm in New Castle. The duckling surprised farm workers by cracking out of his shell to cuddle up to the rabbit (AFP photo)

Jordan Times

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Health over trade

THE KYOTO world conference on global warming is heading for an early disagreement, with the international community split three ways on how to respond to the dangers of the so-called greenhouse effect. The European countries are spearheading the crusade for effective gas emission controls and are calling for a reduction of emissions by 15 per cent beyond the year 2000. Japan is taking the minimalist option by refusing to go beyond a five per cent target. The U.S., which is responsible for 25 per cent of all emissions causing global warming, is adopting a middle course that calls for a mere 10 per cent reduction target. The big disappointment of the Europeans is that the U.S., which has only four per cent of the world's population but contributes a quarter of the global problem, is refusing to take bolder actions against the greenhouse effect. China is also a major contributor to global warming. However, Beijing has taken a weak position on combating global warming.

It is obvious that all the countries which have yet to take global warming seriously enough are putting raw economic factors ahead of long-term environmental considerations that threaten life in all its forms on planet Earth.

The developing countries have naturally taken a hint of what needs to be done from the major industrial nations and unless these states can get their act together and show proper leadership, the less developed countries may not feel obliged to do much to alleviate the problem of global pollution. It seems to us that in terms of priorities, the protection of the environment and the prevention of global warming should supersede all other considerations. Just as without life there can be no meaning to economic development, or any other form of development for that matter, so is material progress meaningless without a viable environment on our planet.

Washington must show statesmanship of the highest order on this issue so that all the other countries may follow in its footsteps. It is bad enough that the U.S. is the main culprit in causing global warming, it should not shrink from making a more determined effort to put the health and well-being of human beings ahead of trade and commerce considerations.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Aswaq's Rashid Hassan Monday said U.N. resolution 181 of 1947 which partitioned Palestine was the beginning of the long and endless suffering of the Palestinian people because it paved the way for the Zionists not only to have a legitimate homeland on Palestinian territory but also because it gave them impetus to expand their empire at the expense of the Arab World. Hassan said the Zionists were not satisfied with the resolution and made plans to conquer all of Palestine and parts of neighbouring Arab countries. He said the Zionists launched war on the Palestinians forcing them to flee from their land in 1948, then they launched war on the Arabs that resulted in the occupation by Israel of all of Palestine and parts of Syria, Lebanon and Egypt in 1967. He said the Zionists are perpetuating their occupation of these lands and depriving the Palestinians, the legitimate owners of the land, of the right to live in their homeland and to establish their own state. The writer said the Israelis did not only disregard the 1947 partition resolution which gave the Palestinians the right to establish their state in their homeland but they are now not respecting the Oslo accord which they had signed with the Palestinians and are disregarding the world community's calls to comply with the requirements of peace.

Al Dustour's Nazih Qousus heavily criticised the Ministry of Labour for what he sees as its failure to control the local labour market. Despite the numerous statements by ministry officials over the past few months about measures intended to reduce the number of guest workers to give a chance to Jordanians to find jobs and so contribute to addressing the unemployment question, the number of non-Jordanian workers is on the increase, Qousus said. Non-Jordanians can be found working as street vendors, in hotels, at bakeries and at various stores and filling jobs that can be given to Jordanians, the writer added. The campaign which the ministry launched in the past few months regarding foreign workers seems to be primarily a way to collect the annual fees from these foreign workers and not to reduce their number, charged the writer. There are thousands of guest workers whose employers had submitted requests to engage them in farming, an occupation that is officially open for foreigners. As for those foreigners working in hotels, restaurants, and many other businesses illegally, their employers are, of course, happy to employ these workers who accept lower wages than Jordanians, the writer said. He said that one way to rid the country of the problem of unemployment is to terminate the employment of foreign workers.

The View from Fourth Circle

Iran, the Mideast's continuing journey into uncharted terrain

By Rami G. Khouri

OF THE three mighty civilisational cultures and strong nation-states in the Middle East — Egypt, Turkey and Iran — the first two today suffer virtually frozen domestic political development. The third — Iran — now emerges as the most exciting Middle Eastern state in terms of the great, ancient indigenous quest for a system of governance that is at once reasonably culturally authentic, ideologically tolerant, and logistically effective. Short-term attention on Iran is rising as we near this month's Islamic Summit in Tehran, and global assessments of Iran's threats to the region and to the world multiply in tandem (often fuelled by real or imagined Israeli concerns, real or imagined neighbouring states, and real or imagined American-British perceptions of the rest of the world). The view from within the Middle East is often considerably different, more vibrant, and less alarming.

The immediate controversy that has rocked Iran in recent weeks revolves around a dissident cleric, Ayatollah Hussein Ali Montazeri, who publicly questioned the competence and even the authority of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader and successor to Imam Ruhollah Khomeini as head of the velayat-e faqih (the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini-midwived state ruled by Islamic jurisprudence and guided by a single wise leader).

Montazeri's challenge to Khamenei is partly dissident habit, partly personal, partly academic, partly theological, and heavily symbolic of the domestic political contestation that defines most of the Middle East. Behind this public controversy in Iran is a much deeper struggle about the nature of pluralistic political rule, the rights of individuals, the role of the state, and the appropriate balance between spiritual faith and political governance. This deeper contestation has taken place for decades in all sectors and institutions of society, such as the bazaar, the armed forces and revolutionary guards, clerical institutions, intellectuals, mass media, universities, men and women of the arts and culture, professional associations and guilds, autonomous foundations, and many other places. It has been experienced since the 1979 revolution despite the attempts by the Islamist revolutionary state, like the Shah's Pahlavi Persian state before it, to fully control public power and private thought and to implement one-party perpetual rule. Iran experiences such chronic internal contestation of power and authority largely due to its status as an ancient rather than a manufactured state. Whether or not it is a threat to others, and despite its considerable domestic use of political violence, Iran remains a major regional power that should not be simplistically reduced to one-dimensional stereo-

typing by hostile forces from the near and far west. It should be seen in its two parallel dimensions: a) sometimes a strong and thus frightening ideological challenge to many existing Middle Eastern regimes, and, b) a possible model for the birth of a new brand of governance that is at once both modern and traditional, global and native, secular and religious, and Western and Islamic.

Reflecting its role as a natural leader in this region, three times in the last three decades Iran has been a regional leader in the business of national ideological configuration — first when the Shah tried to make Iran an instant modern member of NATO in the decade of the 1970s, then when Khomeini tried to make Iran the model Islamic state in the decade after 1979, and now in the post-Khomeini decade when Iranians themselves do political battle to define their personal rights, their national principles, and their processes of power and politics. The Iranian scholar Mehrzad Boroujerdi has noted that the post-revolutionary government's attempt "to devalue and depreciate the habitus and cultural capital of the secular middle class through the use of ideological state apparatuses and 'cultural policing' has failed, indeed has backfired."

So, Montazeri's controversial questioning of the velayat-e faqih is not an isolated or unusual incident; it is the latest in a long series of indigenous forays in the ongoing battle to define the Iranian state and society. Following the post-revolutionary violence of the Khomeini regime and the long war with Iraq, that struggle is now out in the open and more visible. Some of its more recent components and symbols include the two elections of President Rafsanjani, the growth of reform-minded forces during his terms, the conservative resurgence leading to greater conservative-reformist balance in the April 1996 parliamentary elections, the decisive re-election of conservative Ali-Akbar Nateq-Nouri as parliamentary speaker in June 1997, and the landslide, 70 per cent victory by Mohammad Khatami over Nateq-Nouri in this year's presidential election.

President Khatami's huge victory has been widely and correctly interpreted as a popular cry for more humane, less restrictive, and more effective governance, especially by women, the young and the reform-minded. His victory was also a dramatic rejection of the one-party state concept, and a form of shock political accountability for those, like Rafsanjani and Nateq-Nouri, who had exercised massive power but without sufficient results felt by ordinary people. Arab and Iranian analysts have asked if Khatami represents a Gorbachev-like figure who will eventually dismantle the old centralised power system and build a new, more liberal one; others have called his

regime Iran's "third republic," following the Khomeini and the Rafsanjani-Khamenei eras.

As the Islamist credentials of President Khatami are deep and strong, it is naive to expect radical changes from him. More likely, he will continue to institute gradual reforms at a pace that is politically supported by his popular majority. He will do so within the existing Islamist constitutional framework that makes Iran both so distinctive and so different from most other states — and also so important to monitor and to understand. Khatami tapped a powerful streak of discontent among Iranians who seek greater freedom, well-being and dignity — but firmly within an Islamic-Iranian identity that remains central to the character of state and society. Khatami's shock victory occurred, after all, within a system that limited presidential candidates to just four (out of 238) who were approved by a higher council dominated by religious figures — hardly a show of Jeffersonian or even Gorbachevian values. The people of Iran want to improve and humanise their Islamic Republic, not to end it. This ancient land is fascinating and important in a historic sense precisely because it continues to operate within a deliberately Islamist framework, rather than because it flees to other places and personas.

Montazeri's questioning of the velayat-e faqih will intensify the reformist debate within Iranian society. Some Iranians and other Middle Easterners ask if we are witnessing the transition from Iranian "revolutionary legitimacy" towards law-based "constitutional" or "institutional legitimacy." The likelihood is that Iran is indeed in the process of historic change, and has been for decades. Once again, it leads the Middle East politically into the uncharted terrain of power, governance, and accountability. Others in the region are participating in parallel processes, also undergoing gradual change, innovation and experimentation, also defined by odd mixtures of modern and ancient values. Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen are good examples of such transforming states, and Sudan, Morocco, Oman and Kuwait also entice history, and attract attention.

Iran and others in the neighbourhood are worthy examples of ancient peoples seeking to formulate modern and effective governance systems that are also anchored in indigenous values and identities. Nobody has achieved this goal in the modern Middle East, strangely enough. Iran is more important than ever precisely because Egypt and Turkey seem to have paused along this route, while others in the Middle East who explore this exciting terrain seem unable to impact beyond their borders. Keep watching Iran, but not for the reasons that Abe Rosenthal, Bill Clinton or Bibi Netanyahu want you to.

The 'land-mines coalition': Next?

By Gwynne Dyer

IT HAS been a famous victory. The treaty banning anti-personnel mines that is being signed in Ottawa this week was recently described by Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy, one of its prime movers, as setting a new standard for a weapons treaty. "We have support from every region in the world, and there are no exceptions and no loopholes." But what do they do for an encore?

There's still a lot of tidying up to do on the present treaty, naturally. Scores of governments have to ratify it, up to 100 million land-mines have to be lifted, and two major powers — the People's Republic of China and the United States of America — are still refusing to sign. But they will struggle in eventually, and meanwhile mere house-keeping details are not enough to keep the coalition in being.

A new target to follow on from land-mines is needed not only because the world is full of other weapons, but because the coalition that made this treaty was something new in international affairs. It combined the enthusiasm and volunteer manpower of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with the diplomatic and financial resources of governments to push through a disarmament treaty without any significant support from the major powers.

This imaginative coalition is a new instrument for good in world affairs, but tools rust if they are not used. To preserve

the coalition, it needs a new goal now. What should that be?

It's pointless to go after nuclear weapons. There are already a large number of treaties and negotiations that try to control the numbers, delivery systems and geographical spread of nuclear weapons — and none of the major nuclear powers belong to the anti-mine coalition anyway.

The same goes for chemical and biological weapons. Besides, the key element that makes this coalition different is the active participation of NGOs. That's why they gave this year's Nobel Peace Prize to the International Campaign to Ban Land Mines and its U.S. co-ordinator, Jody Williams.

To retain the support of the NGOs, the new target must be a weapon that produces highly visible casualties in the kind of war zones where the NGOs are active. This sort of outsider-led, almost protest-based international campaign depends heavily on the emotional appeal of the cause to the various participants, and the NGOs will not be moved by weapons they rarely or never see used.

On the other hand, there is no point in going after some weapon that all the world's armies really need to do their business on the battlefield. Artillery and mortars are the great killers in conventional warfare, with helicopter gunships and fighter-bombers coming a close second in guerrilla wars. But the armies won't give them up, and the diplomats aren't naive enough to try.

Analyse the question closely, and the

available options narrow rapidly. Anti-personnel mines were an ideal target, being both a "motherhood issue" that mobilised the NGOs, and a nasty, militarily insignificant weapon that most armies don't really mind losing. Unfortunately, there is not a single other weapon that fits the profile nearly as well.

The least bad candidate is assault rifles and the like. At the lower end of the conflict spectrum where the NGOs mostly operate, small-calibre automatic weapons cause lots of highly visible casualties, so the NGOs hate them.

The regular armies will never give up their AK-47s and M-16s, of course, but they wouldn't mind keeping them out of the hands of the paramilitaries filled with permanently stoned teenagers that have become a standard feature of civil wars in poor countries. So the diplomats can see some point in pursuing this objective too.

But this time it can't be a nice, simple campaign to ban the weapons outright. The best that can be done is to put strict limits on who can buy them, and then police the limits fiercely. Assault rifles should not be manufactured at all without a specific order from a legitimate army, and there must be a tough regulatory system on international transfers of second-hand weapons.

It would also be feasible to place tight international controls on the manufacture and sale of bullets for these weapons, since the universal shift to small-calibre, high-velocity rounds for military small arms (so that soldiers can carry more ammunition

for the same weight) means that ammunition for assault rifles is now very different from that for hunting and target rifles.

It's worth doing, and it will probably be done. If it works, the time will come when having drunken teenagers in camouflage jackets and baseball caps stick assault rifles in your face at 'checkpoints' will be a somewhat less common experience in the world, and some thousands or tens of thousands of people who would otherwise be dead will still be alive.

But given the millions of these weapons already floating around the world's black and grey arms markets, it will be a long time before even stringent controls start to make a dent in the problem. And there will never be the kind of triumphant turning of the page that we are seeing in Ottawa this week on mines.

It is worth doing, but if the only outcome were to make it somewhat harder for non-state actors to get their hands on assault weapons, it would be barely worth doing. The added dimension that makes it well worth doing is that it is a means of preserving the new and potentially very useful coalition of forces that was put together for the land-mines campaign.

If all these states and NGOs can develop the habit of working together, the time may come when their collective clout and diverse skills can be put to use in international humanitarian crises not yet dreamed of — and not necessarily weapons-related at all.

LETTERS

Continuing the sports analogy

To the Editor:

RAMI KHOURI'S analysis (Jordan Times, Nov. 25) is on target as usual. If I may carry the sports analogy a little further: the trouble began when assistant coach Peres devised a strategy without head coach Rabin's knowledge to change the rules of the game.

The fans (the Israeli public) expressed their dissatisfaction with the assistant coach (voting him out of office). They got a new coach who has a different strategy — sound flashy, but stall on the field. This works because the team with the ball (which it won on the field of battle) controls.

The opposing team, which plays more than one game at a time (peace, terror) has a crafty autocratic coach (rumoured to be embezzling team funds) — he yells to the media, outside referees, commentators and analysts — but he can't get the control of the ball.

His opposing coach, who has many conflicting coaches and players on his team, will continue to redraw the lines of the playing field and the goal — while his opponent yells, his team quietly keeps moving the ball.

When asked why he plays the game thusly, he would

say that his players and coaches, while unruly, never bought in to the goal of the game that his predecessor and opposing coach secretly agreed to (a Palestinian state) — and since that's not in the rule book, he isn't held to it. No matter what his opponents say.

And while he's lost fans everywhere, he's still the only game in town! Seriously, the analogy shows that since the only vote Israel took on a Palestinian state was a "NO", it follows that settlement building (which is only an obstacle if you're planning to ever cede that territory) is a legitimate pursuit of the elected government, regardless of any secret understandings the Labour Party may have made.

The voters spoke...

As always thanks for your most fine publication.

Saul Newman
Los Angeles, California
USA

Endorsing international terrorism

To the Editor:

U.S. SENATOR Joseph Lieberman was quoted by UPI on November 24 as saying that military action

against Iraq may be the only way to "make it clear that (Iraqi President Saddam Hussein) is the problem, and until he stops, his people are going to suffer." In the above statement, Senator Lieberman threatens the Iraqi population with the imposition of continued hardship, including causing massive deaths, as long as Saddam Hussein does not do what he is told by the U.N./U.S.

Sen. Lieberman's statement represents an endorsement of international terrorism as this crime is defined in the U.S. legal code (Title 18 § 2381).

As a person opposing all forms of terrorism, I call on all decent people to accurately identify the sanctions imposed by the U.S. on the Iraqi civilian population as a gross form of international terrorism and demand the prosecution of individuals endorsing and participating in such terrorist actions. Any failure of bringing terrorists to court is undermining the rule of law in international relations and threatening world peace.

Elias Davidsson
(composer and
human rights activist)
Iceland



Arab and Israeli journalists and press photographers gathered for a press conference in Amman, Jordan, to discuss the UN Development Programme (UNDP) funded anti-U.S. slogans and demonstrations.

AFSED se loan to Jordan

Ramadan Rawashdeh said the Jordanian Times.

AMMAN — The Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development (AFSED) board of directors is expected to approve a \$10 million loan to Jordan on Wednesday.

The loan, which is part of a \$100 million package, is expected to be approved by the AFSED board of directors on Wednesday. The loan is intended to support the Jordanian government's efforts to improve its infrastructure and social services.

The project entails the construction of a new road and the improvement of existing roads in the Jordanian capital, Amman.

Iraqis throw stones

continued from page 11

Iraqi foreign minister Tariq al-Aisawi said Monday that the Iraqi government is not interested in the Gulf state's offer to buy weapons from the United States.

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Klima welcome

continued from page 11

Mr. Klima, the European Union's first president, is expected to visit Jordan in the near future. His visit is seen as a positive step towards strengthening the relationship between the European Union and Jordan.

Mr. Klima is expected to meet with Jordanian officials and to give a speech at the Jordanian Parliament. His visit is seen as a positive step towards strengthening the relationship between the European Union and Jordan.



Iraqi and Arab journalists and poets demonstrate in front of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) offices, Monday in Baghdad. The protestors chanted anti-U.S. slogans and demanded the lifting of U.N. sanctions against Iraq (AFP photo)

Kuwait refuses to forgive Saddam — minister

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait refuses to forgive President Saddam Hussein for Baghdad's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, until he implements U.N. Security Council resolutions, Kuwait's foreign minister was quoted on Monday as saying.

In an interview with the London-based Asharq Al Awsat newspaper, Sheikh Sabah Ahmed Sabah also said Iraq would bear the responsibility for any action ordered by the U.N. Security Council, including an armed strike.

Asked what he thought of United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Zaid Ben Sultan Nahayan's call to forgive President Hussein, Sheikh Sabah said "I am sorry to say that I oppose this talk because Saddam Hussein is not trustworthy."

"We do not want to intervene in Iraq's internal affairs, but we believe Iraq must implement all Security Council resolutions pertaining to

its aggression against Kuwait and then we will discuss matters raised by Sheikh Zaid," he said.

Kuwait was freed in 1991 from a seven-month Iraqi occupation by U.S.-led Gulf war forces. The U.N. imposed sanctions on Iraq, demanding it eliminate all weapons of mass destruction before they can be lifted.

On Monday Kuwait tested a new nationwide system of warning sirens for the first time since the Iraqi troops were driven out. About 150 sirens wailed on schedule at 11 a.m. followed by an all clear five minutes later.

Kuwaiti troops and Western forces in the Gulf region have been on the alert since an Iraq-U.N. standoff over weapons inspections in Iraq began on Oct. 29 when Baghdad announced a ban on American monitors serving in U.N. inspection teams.

The Iraqi government

later allowed U.N. inspectors including Americans to return, but has banned them from inspecting any of the president's palaces for banned weapons.

On Saturday, Kuwait's Defence Minister Sheikh Salem Sabah Salem Sabah invited bids for the sale of gas masks and welcomed a move by private merchants who have already ordered masks to protect against chemical and biological weapons.

The United Nations and some world powers and regional states say Iraq still has weapons of mass destruction. Iraq says it has complied with U.N. resolutions and that U.N. sanctions imposed after it invaded Kuwait should be lifted.

The UAE president, Sheikh Zaid, said last week that the Iraqi people had suffered enough under U.N. sanctions and called on Arab leaders to forgive President Hussein and turn a new page in Arab relations.

No illegal arms in Iraq, Russian communist says

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian communist leader Gennady Zyuganov said he had visited "secret sites" in Iraq and was convinced Baghdad had no biological or chemical weapons.

Mr. Zyuganov told reporters he had held consultations with experts at the Russian embassy in Baghdad, including the ambassador himself, during a just-ended tour of Iraq and the Middle East.

"I myself visited secret sites," he said, adding he was "convinced that Iraq does not possess bacteriological or chemical weapons."

He gave no details and did not say whether the "secret sites" included the Iraqi presidential palaces at the centre of the latest dispute between the government in Baghdad and U.N. weapons inspectors.

Iraq has drawn up an invitation list of 117 international observers from the countries in the U.N. Security Council and which participate in the Special Commission (UNSCOM) of arms inspectors to visit the "people's palaces."

But the Iraqi leadership has refused to allow UNSCOM, which it alleges is U.S.-dominated, to enter the palaces on the basis of sovereignty.

Urging the United Nations to lift sanctions imposed on Iraq as a result of the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, Mr. Zyuganov said it was the Iraqi people who were made to suffer from the "inadmissible" embargo.

He defended Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, saying he was "very different from the stereotype presented in certain media."

"He is well aware of what is happening in his country and keen to maintain the traditional relations between Iraq and Russia," Mr. Zyuganov said.

Syria: U.S. attack on Iraq would be 'unacceptable'

DUBAI (AFP) — U.S. military action against Iraq over U.N. weapons inspections would be "unacceptable," Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam said Monday.

"We think that a military strike on Iraq would be dan-

gerous for the region and unacceptable," Mr. Khaddam said in an interview with Al Hayat, a leading Arab newspaper based in London.

"We informed Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz of our position," he said, referring to a Damascus visit

in late November that was the first by a senior Iraqi official in 17 years.

Mr. Khaddam called on sanctions-hit Iraq to implement all U.N. Security Council resolutions, but asked why sanctions were not also slapped on Israel.

"Why is no resolution adopted against Israel for its daily aggression in Palestine, in the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon?" the Syrian vice president asked.

Turning to Syria's troubled relations with Turkey, he condemned "the Turkish inva-

sion of northern Iraq and its attempts to provoke a division of Iraq."

Mr. Khaddam also called for Ankara to abandon its military links with Israel, saying that "its real interests lie with the Arab World and not with Israel."

AFSED set to approve \$113m loan to Jordan tomorrow

By Ramadan Rawashdeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development (AFSED) board of directors is expected to approve of a \$113 million loan to Jordan on Wednesday, according to fund's sources.

They said that the loan, which will be paid back over 16 years after a six-year grace period, is to finance an integrated project in the southern Jordan Rift Valley.

The project entails the

construction of dams at Waleh, Tannour and Mujib along with a pipeline for drawing water from Al Mujib to irrigate lands.

The fund's engineering consultant Fahd Natour told the Jordan Times that a loan draft agreement was signed by the Ministry of Water and Irrigation and the AFSED recently, but the fund's board, chaired by Abdul Latif Al Hamad, is yet to give its final approval which is expected Wednesday.

An AFSED delegation has visited Jordan for ten days during which its

members conducted a comprehensive survey of the plans and prepared a detailed report about its feasibility studies, recommending approval of the loan.

The dam in Mujib is designed to collect flood water to be used for industrial and agricultural purposes in the southern Jordan Valley, according to the sources which noted that the dam, which will have an estimated cost of \$79 million, is to be 51.5 metres high with an overall water storage capacity of 35 million cubic metres.

The dam at Waleh, which will be 45 metres high and 300 metres long, is to have a capacity of 9.3 million cubic metres of water while the 65-metre high dam at Tannour is designed to hold 8.9 million cubic metres of rain water which will be used to irrigate 30,800 dunums.

The Ministry of Water and Irrigation has finalised all the blueprints and tender documents for the implementation of these projects.

Iraqis throw stones at U.N. observers

(Continued from page 1)

Kuwait's foreign minister was quoted on Monday as saying the tiny Gulf state refuses to forgive President Saddam Hussein for the invasion until he implements U.N. Security Council resolutions.

In an interview with the London-based Asharq Al Awsat newspaper, Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah also said Iraq would bear the responsibility for any action ordered by the U.N. Security Council, including an armed strike.

Kuwaiti troops and Western forces in the Gulf region have been on the alert since the Iraq-U.N. stand-off over weapons inspections in Iraq began on Oct. 29 when Baghdad announced a ban on Ameri-

can monitors serving in U.N. inspection teams.

The Iraqi government later allowed U.N. inspectors, including Americans, to return, but has banned them from inspecting any of President Saddam's palaces for banned weapons.

Iraq said on Monday that the U.S. military build-up in the Gulf would not scare it into reversing its decision.

"As the American administration... sends more frigates and air force troops to the region, it would be mistaken if it thinks the use of weapons would force Iraq to change its national decision," said Al Thawra newspaper of the ruling Baath party.

The United States in turn soundly rejected Iraq's

offer to allow diplomats and U.N. experts — but not U.N. arms monitors — to inspect the palaces for banned weapons of mass destruction.

"We're not going to accept it," Bill Richardson, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, said on ABC's "Good Morning America."

"We think it should be U.N. inspectors that are qualified, that know what they're doing... not diplomats."

A clean bill of health from the arms inspectors is essential if the sanctions on Iraq are to be lifted.

Outspoken U.S. black civil rights leader, Louis Farrakhan, said on Sunday he hoped to help bridge the gap between the United States and President Sad-

dam during a visit to Iraq.

Mr. Farrakhan, head of the Nation of Islam black religious movement, said on "Fox News Sunday" that he was about to leave for a wide-ranging tour including stops in Iraq, Libya and Cuba and, if granted a visa, Israel.

Mr. Farrakhan said he hoped to be able to report to President Saddam that "here's a man that is ready to sit down, talk with the American administration, and come to terms with disagreements with America."

U.N. representative, Mr. Richardson, commented: "The trip would be unhelpful at this time because we're right now obviously in a state of tension."

Majali, Klima welcome Israeli troop pullout plan in line with accords

(Continued from page 1)

and medicine for the people of Iraq.

"On one hand, we have to insist on the control (procedure), of the international organisations in Iraq and on the other hand, we know that the people of Iraq need some support, especially food and health care," Mr. Klima said before leaving Jordan at the end of a two-day visit.

Austria will take over the European Union presidency in the second

half of 1998. Mr. Klima's talks with Jordanian leaders focused on ways to boost economic links and develop bilateral ties.

"We will share our experiences in education for engineers, blue-collar workers, transport, infrastructure, housing system, wastewater management, water supplies and other sectors," Mr. Klima said.

"We also agreed to strengthen ties between the private and public sectors in our countries."

Mr. Klima said Jordan's signing of an association agreement with the European Union last week will serve the Kingdom's economy and stressed that Austria could become a transit point for Jordanian-made goods.

"We would like to congratulate Jordan for being the first Arab country that has signed the association agreement. The cooperation between the Europeans, the Mediterranean area and the Middle East becomes more and more

important in the global competition," he said.

"This competition should strengthen the economic relations between the EU and the Middle East," he added. "Austria can serve Jordan as a hub for the EU markets and central and eastern European markets because we have long time relations with our neighbours."

Mr. Klima also pledged to help boost Jordanian-EU economic ties when it takes over the presidency.

Ankara to lift embargo on Israeli turkeys

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Ankara has decided to lift its veterinary embargo against turkeys from Israel, a spokesman for Israel's ministry of agriculture said here Monday.

Naftali Yaniv said that Turkish Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs Mustafa Tasar announced Ankara's decision as he began a visit to Israel earlier in the day.

Mr. Yaniv said the deci-

sion to lift the embargo, which Ankara put in place several months ago for veterinary reasons, is part of a veterinary accord to be signed during the Turkish official's visit.

Prior to the embargo, Israel sold some 510 million worth of turkeys to Turkey yearly.

Mr. Tasar is accompanied by a delegation of some 40 officials from Turkey's public and private sector.

He has said his visit to Israel is to promote agricultural cooperation.

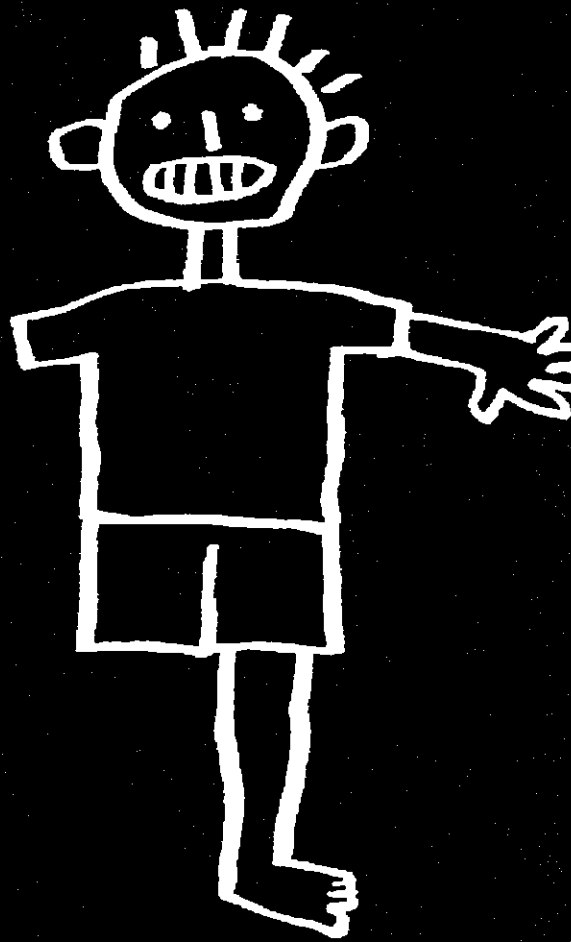
The Turkish minister said before leaving Istanbul earlier in the day that trade between Turkey and Israel could soon reach \$2 billion per year.

He also said that during his visit Israel and Turkey will explore possibilities for agricultural cooperation within the framework of the GAP project, an ambitious

irrigation and energy production programme in southeast Anatolia.

Mr. Tasar is to meet with Israeli President Ezer Weizman, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Foreign Minister David Levy.

A cooperation accord signed in February 1996 between Turkey and Israel has angered many Arab countries, notably Egypt and Syria, as well as Iran.



LANDMINES MUST BE STOPPED

OTTAWA CONFERENCE
TO BAN ANTI-PERSONNEL LANDMINES

2 - 4 DECEMBER 1997





HRH Crown Prince Hassan and Chancellor Viktor Klima view Jordanian products on display at the permanent exhibition of the Jordan Industrial Estate Corporation (Petra photo)

Prince Hassan and Chancellor Klima discuss scopes of cooperation between Jordan, Austria

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Monday held talks with Austrian Chancellor Viktor Klima on scopes of bilateral cooperation in economic fields after the signing of the partnership agreement between Jordan and the European Union.

Prince Hassan stressed during a meeting at the Sahab Industrial Estate the need for establishing regional and trans-regional cooperation.

Prince Hassan briefed Chancellor Klima on Jordan's efforts to develop the Jordan Rift Valley in order to achieve regional development for the benefit of the peoples of the region.

The Crown Prince emphasised that all the countries of the region will benefit from developing the valley.

Chancellor Klima stressed his country's interest in developing economic cooperation with Jordan and in discussing scopes of joint investments.

He was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs and Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Anani, Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh, Minister of Transport and Telecom-

munications Bassam Saket, Minister of Planning Rima Khalaf, Minister of Public Works and Housing Nasser Lawzi, Minister of Trade, Industry and Supply Hani Mulki.

The concerned ministers stressed that Jordan's strategic position in the region qualifies it to be a centre of economic and trade cooperation in the Middle East.

Chancellor Klima voiced his country's readiness to bolster its economic cooperation with Jordan.

Prince Hassan escorted Chancellor Klima in a tour to the estate's industrial exhibition where he was briefed by Amer Majali, director general of the Jordan Industrial Estates Corporation (JIEC), about various products on display.

Mr. Majali indicated that many products are exported to Europe, the United States and other world markets.

The JIEC looks after 348 factories at the Sahab industrial estate where a total of about 14,000 workers are employed and also 56 plants at Al Hassan Industrial Estate in Irbid where 2,000 are employed.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You and your friends have a marvelous time early this week. The boss is watching to make sure work gets out on time. He or she is in a good mood, however, so let the party continue. You're getting a lot done and having a great time. Make that your objective, anyway.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Make a payment on an overdue bill so you can relax. Once you get your finances straightened out, your love life takes priority. Make plenty of time to discuss your plans this evening. Between the two of you, success is assured.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Do you own your home? Would you like to? It's possible if you plan ahead, but it will take discipline. If you're not up to buying, renovation is possible. You'll need a partner's help. Maybe you never believed it could happen. Well, believe it. Also, get busy.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) You'll clash with an older person around the middle of the day. It's hard to keep your comments to yourself. You are a master of disguises, so pretend you're charmed by this person's rude remark. Review the incident later, with a partner you can trust, and learn.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Your workload is intense, and you'd rather be playing. Here come friends you haven't seen in years, and you've scarcely got time to do lunch. At least you can race around the block during your break. Do that, and you'll be rejuvenated for the afternoon shift.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) There's confusion at home. You're decorating, and heaven knows what. This year will be more exciting than usual. You should be in a fabulous mood and full of affection. Go back to that state of mind whenever you notice yourself getting nervous. It'll benefit the entire group.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You may not have paid much attention to traditions in the past. Right now, however, there's a good opportunity for you to learn. Interview the elders of your tribe. You'll be surprised at how good this makes you all feel, and how powerful it helps you to become.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Will the family expect holiday goodies? If so, get busy. You can either buy them or make from scratch, but either way takes time. Start now, so you'll have exactly the right thing at hand. Being excellent doesn't come easily, but it's worth the effort.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) This is a good day to ask for a raise. Your boss is in a generous mood, partially because you've been so good lately. Offer to do something extra. Not only will you make a little more cash, but you'll also further your chances for your next promotion.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Look far away for the solution to a problem close to home. Be willing to try something a little different. For example, you might find that perfect gift in a catalogue. Send for it early, to make sure it arrives on time. Early means right now.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Plans you have with a friend may be thwarted. Figure out how to deal with the bureaucracy and you can iron out this little wrinkle. The answer should become obvious this afternoon. Somebody on the other side might find the solution. Be nice and your odds improve.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) The festive mood continues, except for a possible glitch around midday. You could spend too much on lunch, of all things. Don't offer to buy for everyone you know. That's just the sort of thing you'd do. Guard against that tendency; it could cost more than it's worth.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon

Majali overhauls JIEC to better serve industrialists

By Samir Ghawi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Factory and plant owners at the Amman and Irbid industrial zones no longer need to shuttle between government ministries and departments to sort out or resolve any problem they may encounter because the Jordan Industrial Estates Corporation (JIEC) has taken over such a task last month. The JIEC will be the coordinator shouldering all the issues that the industrialists want to take up with government entities.

Amer Majali, the new JIEC director general, told the Jordan Times.

Mr. Majali stressed that as part of an operational overhaul he initiated a few weeks ago, industrialists under the JIEC umbrella will be given all the assistance and facilities, thus easing the burden of having to follow up on government procedures.

The assistance has gone as far as intervening on behalf of an industrialist who was unable to persuade the authorities to exempt him from customs on raw material input for the production of glucose in order to be able to compete with the imported product.

"I immediately wrote to the Department of Customs about the problem and

secured he requested exemption," Mr. Majali said proudly for being able to prevent the looming bankruptcy of the industrialist.

The overhaul being carried out covers many aspects of work such as motivating and upgrading the skills of the personnel and improving supervision and controls.

"Our wide-ranging shake-up even goes as far as cleaning, protection and giving the industrial zones a better operational environment," the director general emphasised.

Noting that the industrial states include free zones, different bonded areas, cus-



Amer Majali

tom's office and banks, he indicated that the aim is to invigorate and revitalize the Jordanian industries in order to achieve higher productivity and better quality.

In this regard, the JIEC

(Continued on page 9)

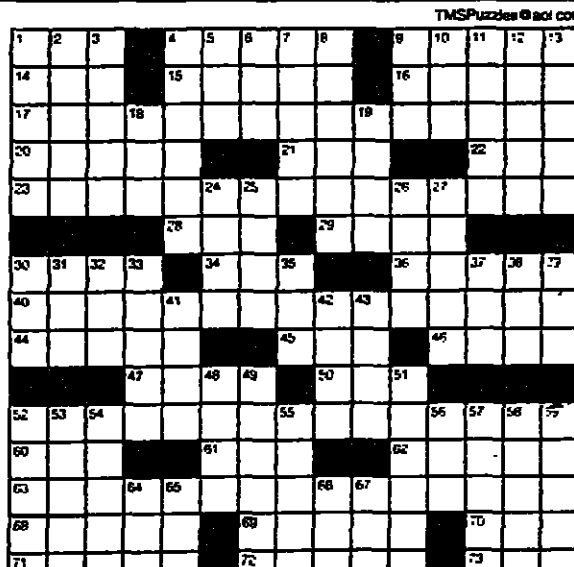
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THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

- ACROSS**
- 1 Past mates
 - 4 Demonstrates
 - 9 Just right
 - 14 Branch
 - 15 Plankster
 - 16 Composer Grotle
 - 17 Turkey
 - 20 Perfum
 - 21 Grass ground
 - 22 Above, poetically
 - 23 Turkey
 - 28 L.A. summer hrs.
 - 29 Great quantity
 - 30 Conventional symbol
 - 34 Gaffer Woonam
 - 36 Breaks in friendly relations
 - 40 Turkey
 - 44 Condescend to give
 - 45 Alternative to KS
 - 46 Tranquillity
 - 47 Reverberation
 - 50 All's sister
 - 52 Turkey
 - 60 "Big Blue"
 - 61 Buddy
 - 62 Peace goddess
 - 63 Turkey
 - 68 Scoundrel
 - 69 Formal proclamation
 - 70 Fort Worth sch.
 - 71 Magic showplace
 - 72 Descartes and Auberginis
 - 78 Exclamations of comprehension
- DOWN**
- 1 Excessive enthusiasm
 - 2 We all?
 - 3 Buffalo Bob or Bubba
 - 4 Lug laboriously
 - 5 Nexus of activity
 - 6 Of the ear: Pref.
 - 7 Sausage
 - 8 Wild animal tracks
 - 9 Contingences
 - 10 Actress Susan
 - 11 Misprint
 - 12 French farewell
 - 13 Get into one's head



By Bill Swain
New Port Richey, FL

COMB SPUD SMALL
ALEE TONI MOLEY
PINA OTIS AROAR
POUNDWATCHHOUSE
CEES OINS
AGNUS HALL ESTS
SHORAN LOIS ONE
PADDLEDAYSTIRED
ENE TROI MADAME
NAISA USNA NIGER
POD LOGG
FACETAGFISHTRIOT
AGAMA MICH BOSH
LURER EDIE QAHU
KEANU NOAA XMAS

POD LOGG
FACETAGFISHTRIOT
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LURER EDIE QAHU
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LURER EDIE QAHU
KEANU NOAA XMAS

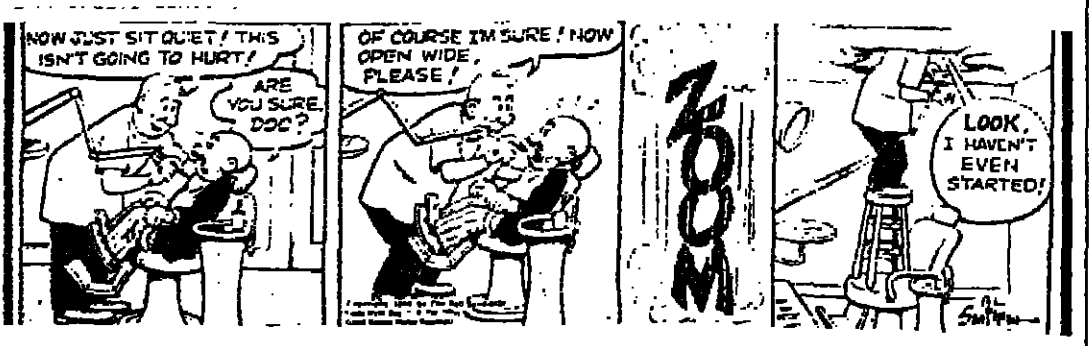
Peanuts



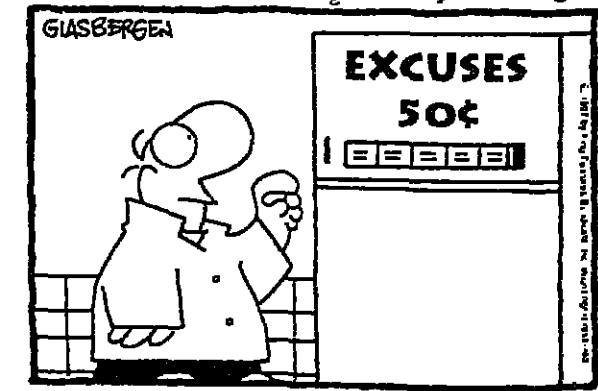
Andy Capp



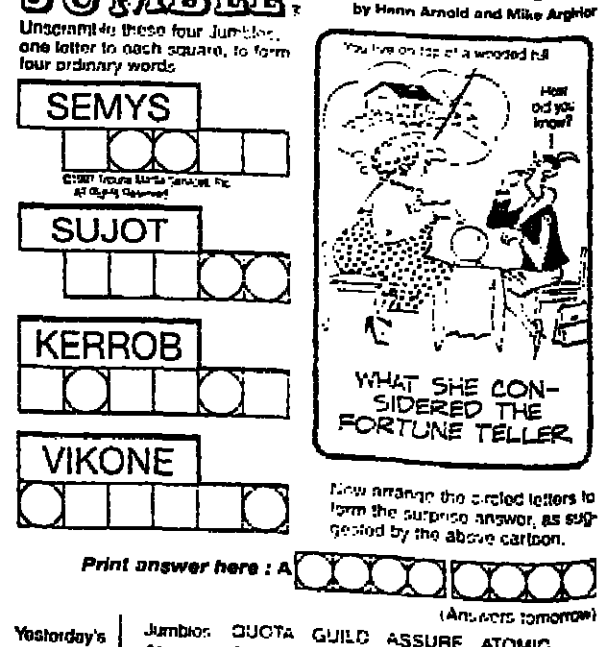
Mutt 'n' Jeff



THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen



JUMBLE



As a result of a growing trend, banks expanded by 2.5 percent in the first nine months of the year, from JD6.1 billion at the end of 1996 to JD6.3 billion at the end of 1997. This growth also reflected the fact that the banks' assets were up by 27.6 percent in the first nine months of the year, from JD9.3 billion at the end of 1996 to JD12.1 billion at the end of 1997. According to a study prepared by the Jordanian Bankers' Association, the total assets of the banks in 1997 are up by 27.6 percent from 1996. The figure is also reflected in the Central Bank's report on the state of the banking sector at the end of September. The figure is also reflected in the Central Bank's report on the state of the banking sector at the end of September. The figure is also reflected in the Central Bank's report on the state of the banking sector at the end of September.

Food subsidy costs drop sharply

A REPORT submitted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development shows that the cost of food subsidies in the first eight months of this year declined by 27.6 percent from the same period last year.

REUTERS

The Busi

Major Currencies & C

Currency	USD	DEM
US Dollar	1.7762	
DE Mark	0.5533	
GB Sterling	1.5840	2.9920
CH Franc	0.6891	123.96
JP Yen	0.0077	1.3748
CA Dollar	0.7020	1.2389
IT Lira	0.0005	1.0295
NL Guilder	0.4556	36.74
FR Franc	0.1652	0.2987

Major Currencies & C

Currency	USD	JOD
US Dollar	1.4124	0.7080
Jordan Dinar	0.2955	0.1888
Saudi Riyal	0.2747	0.1945
Bahrain Dinar	0.2747	0.1945
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945
Kuwait Dinar	0.2747	0.1945
Emirate Dinar	0.2747	0.1945
Lebanese 1000	0.85	0.4618
Egyptian	0.2937	0.2080

Energy

Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	18.44	18.81
WTI	18.64	19.10
Bonny	18.44	18.81
Dubai	17.40	17.70
UL Gas	182.00	194.00

Metal Prices

Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz)	293.7	294.2
Silver (oz)	5.23	5.25
Platinum (oz)	382	384
Al (3 Months)	1589	1589
Cu (3 Months)	1843	1844
Zinc (3 Months)	1136	1136
Lead (3 Months)	542	544
Ni (3 Months)	6130	6160

Energy

Commodity	Last
Coffee (Jub)	0
Cocoa (Jub)	1604
Sugar (Jub)	302
Wheat (Jub)	127
Soy (Jub)	0
Tea (Jub)	155
Barley (Jub)	0
Rice (Jub)	370

JORD

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Daily Beat
A review of news from the Arabic Press

Trend to save growing

AS A result of a growing trend to save, deposits at banks expanded by 2.4 per cent during the first nine months of this year as it climbed from JD6.1 billion at the end of last year to JD6.3 billion at the end of last September. This growth also reflected on the assets which soared by 27.6 per cent during the first nine months of this year compared to the whole of 1996.

According to a study prepared by Mufleh Aqel, executive director at the Arab Bank, total assets in 1996 amounted to JD7.3 billion but the monthly statistical bulletin of the Central Bank puts the total assets of banks at JD9.3 billion until the end of September. The figure is expected to grow further during the coming days.

The growing trend to save is based on small and medium-size households who prefer to reap guaranteed profits that high interest rates on deposits provide, instead of other investments. For their part, banks have also preferred to invest in certificates of deposit, offered by the Central Bank, as being the most suitable and easiest way to secure profits without taking any lending risks (Al Ra'i).

Food subsidy costs drop sharply

A REPORT submitted by the Ministry of Supply about its achievements during the first eight months of this year shows a big decline in its purchases of rice, wheat,

sugar, milk, barley and corn. This means that the financial costs borne by the government have decreased from JD90 million to JD40 million.

The report showed that the total food subsidy during the eight months amounted to JD22 million. The amount of the subsidy during 1996 was JD118 million.

Beltagi plans to boost tourism

ACCORDING TO Tourism Minister Aqel Beltagi, a government decision will soon be issued to exempt tourist programmes, arranged by travel and tour agents, from income tax on condition that the programme includes a visit to a governorate such as Salt, Karak, Ajloun or Irbid.

In a recent lecture, he said that the Ministerial Development Council has approved the idea of his ministry to establish a lagoon in Aqaba, to the month of the Holiday Hotel.

He revealed that the number of tourists coming to Jordan has dropped by 15 per cent due to unfavourable political climate. He indicated that the Ministry of Tourism will work to raise the number of nights that tourists spend in Jordan from 4.5 nights by 1998 and five nights by the end of the year 2000.

He concluded by stressing that a plan will be implemented soon under which no tourist will be allowed to visit Petra unless he shows a notification proving that he stayed at a Jordanian hotel (Al Ra'i).

Phosphate company considering proposal to raise capital to JD88 million

By Abdul Salam Gharaibeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The board of directors of the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) is studying a proposal to increase the company's capital to JD88 million and to float the company's shares for public subscription and listing on international financial markets, because of the shortage of cash liquidity in Jordanian capital market, well-placed banking sources said Monday.

one of the banks here said the total shares to be floated are worth JD56 million, calculated on the present prices. He anticipated that 60 per cent or 70 per cent of the JPMC's shares will be floated at the London financial market.

A member of the JPMC board, who preferred anonymity said the company is currently preparing an accurate analytical budgeting for the company's assets to determine the actual value of the new shares, in preparation for floating an equal number of

shares similar to those currently in circulation.

He noted that the current share price at Amman Financial Market is approximately JD 3.550.

A total of seven shareholding companies, including banks and insurance companies are currently floating JD29 million worth of shares for private subscription to increase their capitals to meet the criteria provided by the regulations and laws in force.

A banking source attributed the low cash liquidity to two major factors one of

which being the Central Bank of Jordan's policy to absorb the surplus liquidity at banking institutions through the issuance of certificates of deposits on a biweekly basis or whenever the need arises. Such a surplus amounts to approximately JD200 million a month, according to the sources.

The second reason is attributable to the large number of shares floated by companies, which have been established during the last few years to increase their capital to meet the cri-

teria stipulated by the Central Bank, the source said.

The JPMC last July floated \$100 million worth of commercial shares at the rate of \$99.9, while the issue price was \$99.25.

Circulation activity in international markets has shown that the average circulation is no less than \$5 million a day, or the equivalent of five per cent of the values of the issue. This could place the JPMC in the second position after the Arab Potash Company, sources said.

JIEC chief aims to invigorate, revitalise industries

(Continued from page 8)

has distributed a questionnaire to all industrialists to determine the specific needs and the areas where higher attention should be given.

In addition, Mr. Majali said, coordination with the Investment Promotion Corporation and JEDCO (the Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centres Corporation), will be strengthened in order to

make the industrial cycle better organised and efficient.

Mr. Majali outlined the framework of the new set-up at JIEC saying that the front desk of the corporation is an Investors Service Bureau manned by two highly qualified officials.

The bureau, he explained, handles three categories, namely: the new investor, the existing (old) investor and functioning as a coordinator

with all outside parties.

The new investor is required to fill in a form and is told about the documents s/he should be providing. The applicant's name and other necessary information is fed into a computer database and the new investor is given a fixed number which will serve as reference for all future dealings.

"When the new investor returns on a certain fixed date, s/he will find all the

procedures and the registration process complete," Mr. Majali said.

The existing investor is given a specific card for any future dealings with the corporation.

To be able to control and double check the efficiency and effectiveness of the system, the computer network is directly connected to the office of the director general who will follow up daily with the conditions at the estates.

Mr. Majali also highlighted the permanent exhibition that was set up at the entrance of the JIEC to display the products of the industries of the estate. He specifically underlined that some of the products are widely being accepted in European markets and in the U.S.

Asked about future plans, Mr. Majali revealed that construction will start before the end of this year at the Karak industrial estate which, in the first phase, will cover 580 dunums.

He said that the Al Hassan Industrial Estate in Irbid is totally occupied and that another 200 dunums will be added to the existing 420 dunums area by the end of next year.

"In order to give a major boost to the industrial sector, we are even considering giving more incentives to any party willing to set plants in other estates being planned for Mafrqa, Aqaba and Zarqa," the director general said.

He explained that these incentives will be in addition to what the JIEC and the Investment Promotion Corporation already provide in various benefits.

Mr. Majali saw industrial estates in various governorates as a partial solution to the unemployment problem because they will open job opportunities as well as provide opportunities for residents in remote areas to be trained and be pre-qualified at these industrial estates.

On a wider scale, Mr. Majali said the ambition now is to include the Sahab industrial estate as a Qualified Industrial Zone (QIZ) similar to that of Irbid's Al Hassan Industrial Estate in order to spread the benefits to the industrialists in other regions.

The JIEC chief said more ideas and projects could materialise from the industrialists themselves, with whom he is conducting monthly meetings along with the directors concerned at the JIEC to review progress and discuss any development.

Mr. Majali concluded by inviting all interested parties to contact the JIEC for further information noting that the corporation's telephone was a "general voice mail system" that can provide a good deal of information about the corporation and the services it renders.

REUTERS REUTERS
The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7762	0.6938	1.4324	128.13	1.4248	1738.60	2.0016	5.9448
DE Mark	0.5630	-	0.3340	0.8063	72.60	0.8018	978.50	1.1268	3.3463
GB Sterling	1.6840	2.9920	-	2.4115	217.35	2.3990	2927.98	3.3704	10.0116
CH Franc	0.6991	1.2348	0.4142	-	90.12	0.9943	1213.09	138.89	4.1489
JP Yen	0.0077	1.3748	0.4593	1.1084	-	1.1026	134.6	154.93	4.8010
CA Dollar	0.7020	1.2389	0.4187	1.0007	1.10	-	1213.86	1.3963	4.1480
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0205	0.3410	0.8823	1348.62	0.8185	-	11.50	3.4165
NL Guilder	0.4996	88.74	0.2963	71.52	84.46	0.7113	888.02	-	2.9685
FR Franc	0.1682	0.2987	0.0998	24.0777	21.70	0.2395	33.67	33.6700	-

Middle Eastern Currencies

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	0.7080	3.7605	0.3770	3.6406	0.3043	3.6728	1533.00	3.4045
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	-	6.2973	0.6326	5.1418	0.4287	5.1876	2165.25	4.8086
Saudi Riyal	0.2686	0.1888	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0811	0.98	408.75	0.9077
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8780	9.8485	-	9.66	0.8071	9.74	4066.42	9.0307
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	1.0302	1.0302	-	0.0836	1.01	421.10	0.9352
Kuwait Dinar	3.2868	2.3270	12.3270	1.2391	11.97	-	12.07	5038.62	0.9382
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0212	1.0212	0.9812	0.0828	-	417.39	0.9289
Lebanese 1000	0.85	0.4618	2.4465	0.2459	2.3748	0.1985	2.3958	-	2.2206
Egyptian	0.2537	0.2080	1.1016	0.1107	1.0693	0.0894	1.0788	450.28	-

Energy

Oil	Lat	Prev
Brent	18.44	18.51
W. Texas	18.44	18.10
Bonny	18.44	18.51
Dubai	17.40	17.70
UL Gas	182.00	184.00

Metal Prices

Metal	Lat	Prev
Gold (oz's)	293.7	294.2
Silver (oz's)	6.23	6.26
Platinum (oz's)	382	384
AL (3 Months)	1588	1589
CU (3 Months)	1843	1844
Zinc (3 Months)	1135	1136
Lead (3 Months)	542	544
NI (3 Months)	6130	6160

Energy

Commodity	Lat	Prev
Coffee (c/lbs)	0	Spot
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1804	Spot
Sugar (\$/ton)	302	Spot
Wheat (\$/ton)	127	Spot
Soya (c/lbs)	0	Spot
Tea (c/lbs)	165	Spot
Barley (\$/bsh)	0	Spot
Rice (\$/ton)	370	Spot

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHEIKH SAHAB
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179

ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 01/12/1997

PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
346,000	249,000	ARAB BANK	15.3	1.20	2	100	33200	330.50	332.00	1.50+
N 2,340	1,480	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	8	0.00	39	19787	37388	1.87	1.91	0.04+
S 3,600	1,900	BANK OF JORDAN	6.3	0.00	6	2000	4088	2.10	1.99	-11-
1,190	890	MID. EAST INV. BK.	68.3	0.00	1	200	208	1.04	1.04	-
2,680	1,150	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	10.2	6.13	4	1800	4644	2.58	2.58	-
I 5,200	4,600	THE HOUSING BK.	15.7	3.69	8	11350	59544	5.19	5.26	0.07+
S 4,180	1,850	JOR. KUWAIT BANK	10.7	0.00	2	500	1005	1.96	2.01	0.05+
1,050	740	JOR. GULF BANK	4.5	9.21	2	3000	2280	0.76	0.76	-
S 4,050	2,900	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	15.5	3.16	57	22218	68107	3.06	3.04	-0.02-
BANK SECTOR TOTALS										
INDEX: 239.36 %CHG: +0.46										
2,020	1,590	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.5	7.69	4	2300	4435	1.87	1.95	0.08+
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS										
INDEX: 117.01 %CHG: +0.43										
2,050	1,550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.3	5.21	9	24950	47902	1.92	1.92	-
4,030	1,320	IRBID ELECTRICITY	16.6	4.12	1	500	1395	2.94	2.79	-15-
1,550	930	NATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	11	10500	11780	1.14	1.12	-0.02-
8,900	6,700	ALRA'I	14.9	6.02	1	250	2078	8.30	8.31	0.01+
3,900	2,890	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	9.7	0.00	4	11300	42036	3.73	3.72	-0.01-
1,050	740	JORDAN EXPT. INV.	9	0.00	1	100	80	0.77	0.80	0.03+
1,100	900	ZARQA EDUCATION	9	0.00	1	2250	2160	0.97	0.96	-0.01-
2,230	1,630	UNITED CO.	8.1	6.43	1	250	428	1.69	1.71	0.02+
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS										
INDEX: 106.72 %CHG: +0.08										
1,100	930	ATTACHEES	9	0.00	1	50	55	1.10	1.10	-
4,450	3,010	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	20.9	3.55	14	3415	10566	3.08	3.10	0.02+
4,140	3,050	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	9.8	2.82	4	948	3361	3.55	3.55	-
7,050	5,570	ARAB POTASH CO.	14.9	6.02	1	250	2078	8.30	8.31	0.01+
11,160	9,200	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.2	8.45	6	140	1476	10.55	10.52	-0.03-
4,700	3,300	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	11.5	4.81	12	56647	236097	4.20	4.16	-0.04-
1,670	1,020	JOR. PIPES MANFCT.	17.1	5.80	3	527	740	1.38	1.38	-
1,480	1,050	ARAB JORD. INVEST. CO.	9	0.00	3	2000	869	1.34	1.32	-0.02-
690	450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9.7	0.00	3	2000	920	0.46	0.46	-
770	510	NATIONAL INDS.	9	0.00	2	750	413	0.55	0.55	-
1,200	850	INTERVED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	9	3200	1443	0.46	0.45	-0.01-
+ 3,000	1,850	NATL. CABLE WIRE. NFAC	26.9	0.00	12	8200	9439	1.85	1.80	-0.05-
890	530	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM	9	0.00	12	8250	5115	0.61	0.62	0.01+
+ 1,880	910	UNIV. MOON. INDS.	9	0.00	31	36750	32780	0.91	0.89	-0.02-
1,620	1,320	NATL. CHLORINE	14.2	4.44	4	1500	2267	1.52	1.51	-0.01-
1,070	810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	16.5	0.00	3	2750	2475	0.90	0.90	-
1,330	1,080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.7	0.00	2	1200	1464	1.23	1.22	-0.01-
810	710	JORDAN STEEL	33.9	6.67	3	15300	11475	0.75	0.75	-
840	570	MID-EAST COMPLEX	7.5	16.39	9	7200	4392	0.62	0.61	-0.01-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS										
INDEX: 116.67 %CHG: +0.37										
GRAND TOTAL										
INDEX: 172.02 %CHG: +0.40										
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 01/12/1997										
670	410	MACH. EPP. REPT. MAIN.	9	0.00	2	2250	1125	0.52	0.50	-0.02-
610	370	JOR. TRADE FAC.	9	0.00	34	96250	35613	0.37	0.37	-
800	660	UNION INV. 50%	9	0.00	2	3000	720	0.24	0.24	-
570	360	ARAB FTR. INVEST.	9	0.00	5	6000	2400	0.42	0.40	-0.02-
N 950	720	AL-SHARQ INV. CO.	9	0.00	3	4800	4060	0.81	0.85	0.04+
780	610	AL-DAWLATIAN 75%	66.2	0.00	3	16090	7080	0.71	0.69	-0.02-
1,480	1,050	CENTROURY INV. GROUP	2	0.00	2	1250	1938	1.48	1.55	0.07+
N 1,000	1,000	ARAB JOR. INVEST. CO.	9	0.00	1	7500	7500	1.00	1.00	-
400	250	JOR. INDS. MATCH-JEMCO	9	0.00	5	10950	1636	0.15	0.16	0.01+
690	440	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	7	6250	3385	0.57	0.54	-0.03-
750	380	NATL. MULT. ENG. NAKICO	9	0.00	29	70250	28100	0.40	0.40	-
640	370	KAYZAK DIES & NOULDS	9	0.00	1	200	76	0.38	0.38	-
730	550	RAZI PHARM.	9	0.00	5	9100	5915	0.63	0.65	0.02+
1,4	750	INDS. ENG.	9	0.00	1	900	150	0.29	0.30	0.01+
1,820	570	NATL. POTTERY	13	0.00	13	20000	11256	0.27	0.27	-
N 1,000	660	MAT. ALUMINIUM. 75%	94.6	0.00	2	750	323	0.68	0.68	-
N 1,000	900	MODERN FOOD IND. 75%	9	0.00	1	250	150	0.90	0.85	-0.05-
GRAND TOTAL										
INDEX: 129 335064 176779										

1 - Max. 12 months high

The rocky road to France '98

MARSEILLE (AFP) — When England and Italy were drawn in the same qualifying group the hot money went on Italy.

It looked an even better investment when England dumped manager Terry Venables after Euro '96 and plumped for the relatively untried Glen Hoddle.

But as the two year qualifying campaign began to unfold it was the 38-year-old Hoddle, who only stopped playing two years ago, who proved the experts wrong.

After Italy, with Cesare Maldini in charge for his first international, beat England 1-0 at Wembley the Italians suddenly lost their form and the door to France '98 began to close.

Hoddle dusted off England, lifted his team, and ended up winning Group two.

The highlight for Hoddle was his impressive 2-0 away win in Poland followed up by a goalless draw in Naples. It sealed a place in France and England's return to the World Cup finals for the first time since 1990.

As Hoddle was celebrating, Maldini found himself forced into a play-off with Russia if he was to take part in France.

With three World Cup titles already to their name, the Italian fans expect success and the thought of not even reaching the finals had them baying for Maldini's blood.

In the end Italy eked out a draw in the snows of Moscow followed by a win in Naples to book their place but Maldini admitted there was much to be sorted out if Italy were to lift a fourth World Cup.

Germany, for so long the force of European football, also struggled to make sure they would be employed next summer.

In the end it came down to their final Group Nine match and a goal in the dying minutes against Albania to give them a 4-3 win and a place in the French sun.

Holland, the nearly team of European football, squeezed in to the finals with a 0-0 draw over Turkey in their final Group Seven match. It gave them a vital one point lead over second placed Belgium who had to beat Ireland in the play-offs to ensure their place.

The Dutch have reached the World Cup final twice, 1974 and 1978, but despite the presence of Johan Cruyff in 1974, lost both times — first to Germany and then Argentina.

Holland are hoping that the presence of their top foreign exports — Michael Reiziger at

Barcelona, Winston Bogarde and Patrick Kluivert at AC Milan, Aaron Winter at Inter Milan, Clarence Seedorf at Real Madrid, Dennis Bergkamp and Marc Overmars at Arsenal — will finally allow them to take the World Cup.

Yugoslavia, who were forced to qualify by going into a playoff against Hungary after Spain won their Group, proved they were back on the international scene by going on a goal spree.

In the first-leg in Budapest, Hungary — who boasted the best side in the World in the 50's — crashed 7-1. In the second-leg, Yugoslavia proved it was no fluke by winning 5-0.

Croatia, formerly a part of Yugoslavia under Tito, also made sure of their place.

A hard-fought victory over Ukraine took Croatia to France next year, marking their biggest success in soccer since emerging as an independent nation six years ago.

Croatia first drew the attention of the soccer world when they qualified with impressive ease for Euro '96, topping a qualifying group featuring 1994 World Cup runners-up Italy.

But this time round they qualified the hard way. Although they won four games and lost only one — an away match in Denmark — a string of three home draws put them on the verge of elimination halfway through the campaign.

Their ordeal finally ended successfully in Kiev on November 15, when a 27th-minute equaliser by Lazio striker Alen Boksic tamed the young Ukrainian side who would have needed three more to win. That game ended 1-1. Croatia took the play-off 3-1 on aggregate. The dream had come true.

While the European sides played no more than 10 matches to reach the finals, the cream of South America were forced to play 16 matches to qualify.

Argentina proved they were still the second side on the continent, behind Brazil, by winning the South American Zone. It was an impressive performance by the former World Cup holders. They only lost two of their 16 matches, winning eight and drawing six.

Joining them in France will be Paraguay, Colombia and Chile. For Colombia it will be a chance to erase the nightmare of the 1994 World Cup in the United States. Failing to get beyond the first round, finishing last in their group behind Romania, Switzerland and the United States.

Defender Andres Escobar, who scored an own

goal in the match against the United States, was gunned down by a fanatical supporter on July 2, 1994, shortly after returning to his home town of Medellin.

In the Asian Zone the worst possible scenario for FIFA looked as if it was going to happen when Japan appeared to be down and out. With Japan co-hosting the 2002 World Cup with arch-rivals South Korea, FIFA desperately wanted the Japanese to be at the 1998 finals.

They did — but only after a nail-biting play-off against Iran in Malaysia.

A golden goal in extra-time saw Japan reach their first World Cup finals and FIFA were able to breathe a sigh of relief.

While South Korea, the football force in east Asia, easily won their Group B, Saudi Arabia, the South Korea of the west, snatched their place in their final match — beating Qatar 1-0. Halfway through their qualifying stage, with Iran firm favourites to take the Group, worried Saudi football authorities brought in German coach Otto Pfister for the final two matches.

Pfister lost his first match in charge but his victory over Qatar restored Saudi pride. But while Asian football is still trying to make a real impression on the world scene, Africa threatens to break up the European-South American monopoly.

Nigeria and Cameroon lead the way while South Africa, back after the years of apartheid isolation, have secured their first ever appearance in the World Cup finals.

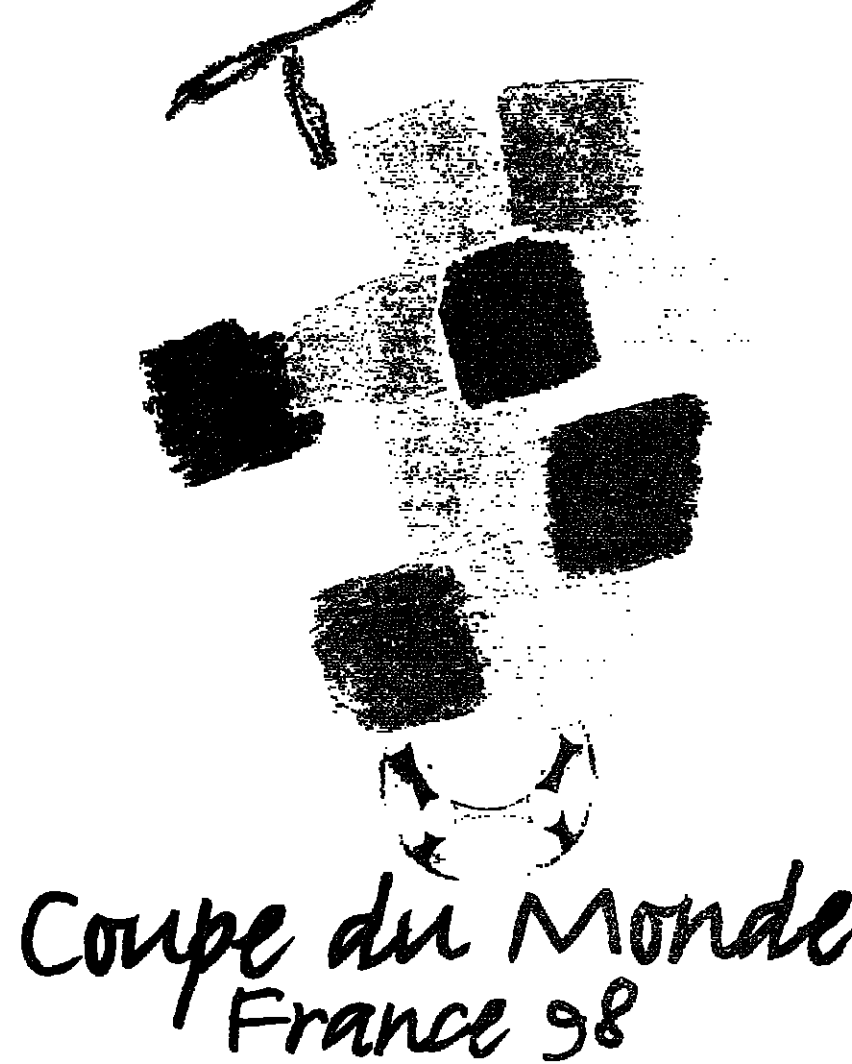
North of the Sahara Morocco easily won their group, finishing nine points clear of second placed Sierra Leone.

Tunisia managed to ease out Egypt, winning five of their six matches and drawing the other. The CONCACAF Zone, marred by the Guatemala stadium disaster last year when 84 fans were crushed to death against perimeter fencing, saw history being made when Jamaica qualified by finishing third in the Final Round Group behind Mexico and the United States.

Jamaica were the first Caribbean side since Haiti in 1974 to reach the finals.

Iran brought the 645-game marathon to a close at Melbourne on Saturday when they beat Australia on away goals, to reach their first finals since 1978, to become the 32nd and last qualifier for France 98.

BORDEAUX



Official poster of the Pierre Leclerc stadium in Bordeaux, southwestern France. The stadium will host matches of the 1998 World Soccer Cup that takes place in France from June 10 to July 12, 1998. Poster was made by French artists Marie Artero and Elise Massenet (AP Photo)

Inspired Madrid take provisional lead

MADRID (AFP) — Real Madrid took provisional pole position in the Spanish league on Sunday night following their 3-1 home thrashing of Celta Vigo.

Madrid, ahead of Barcelona only on goal difference at the start of the weekend, must wait till Barcelona play Merida on Monday to see if they keep their current three-point lead.

Barcelona however would need to win by a five-goal margin to regain top spot from Madrid, who were playing without defenders Christian Panucci and Roberto Carlos. It was a real return to form of once out-of-sorts striker Raul in this match where Yugoslav Predrag Mijatovic, Raul and Clarence Seedorf scored. Vigo's Bosnian Vlado Gudelj earned a late consolation goal.

Real, who avenged their humiliating 4-0 loss to Celta

at the end of last season which took the gloss off their title win, were galvanized by an inspired Raul who scored Madrid's second of the game and his fifth of the season.

He also created the superb final goal by Holland's Seedorf. Raul went past several defenders before passing to Seedorf who only needed to push the ball into the net.

Raul may have timed his comeback to form to perfection with the FIFA World Footballer of the Year trophy up for grabs later this year. Brazil's Ronaldo and France's Juventus midfielder Zinedine Zidane are other serious candidates. Real Sociedad took third spot with a 5-1 crushing of Compostella mainly thanks to their foreign stars — Romania's Gheorghe Craioveanu, Yugoslavia's Darko Kovacevic, formerly with Premiership side

Sheffield Wednesday, and Mutiu Adegboye of Nigeria all scored.

Valencia, who fell 1-0 at home to Salamanca, are languishing in the relegation zone and this setback should seal the return of World Cup star Romario to Brazil.

Valencia supporters ironically cheered the match officials and the opposing team before calling with loud cries for the resignation of Valencia president Paco Roig. In this weekend's matches, third division referees, some young and inexperienced, officiated after a strike by first division referees who complained of lack of respect from players and supporters.

More than 100,000 expected to greet Iranian World Cup heroes

TEHRAN (AFP) — More than 100,000 fans are expected to turn out here on Tuesday to give a hero's welcome to the Iranian football team after their incredible recovery to qualify for next year's World Cup finals.

Tehran's huge Azadi stadium is expected to be full for a ceremony honouring Iran's national team, which came back from two goals down late in the match to eliminate Australia on Saturday on away goals, the IRNA news agency said.

The players are to be flown directly to the stadium by helicopter after their arrival from Dubai, said Ali Ta'ali, head of security for the capital.

The welcoming ceremony is to be broadcast live on state radio and television, which are to conduct interviews with the players following the event.

Millions of Iranians poured on to the streets of every major city Saturday after the final whistle in scenes of public celebration that were virtually unprecedented here.

Thousands of people celebrated the national team's success into the early hours of the morning here as throngs of young people stayed up dancing and hugging each other at major road junctions.

The country's leaders broadcast messages of congratulations and radio and television abandoned normal programming for special features on the game and the street celebrations across the country afterwards.

The national team's success even took precedence over the keenly-awaited first budget of President Mohammad Khatami which was presented to parliament Sunday. When the session opened, the speaker and several MPs rose to pay tribute to the national team and made speeches underlining the need to invest in and give more importance to sport in general and football in particular.

Iran were 2-0 down until the 76th minute of the second leg in Melbourne against Australia.

But two goals in the space of three minutes saw Iran go through to France 98.

Factfiles of 1998 World Cup qualifiers

PARIS (AFP) — Here's a brief look at some of the qualifying nations to the 1998 World Cup in France

JAPAN

• Population: 125,479,000
• Area: 377,818 sq km
• Capital: Tokyo
• Federation: Football Association of Japan founded in 1921.

• Colours: Blue jersey, white shorts, blue socks.
• World Cup record: 1st appearance in finals 1998.
• Asian Cup record: Winners 1992.
• How they qualified: Defeated Iran 3-2 in play-off after finishing 2nd in Asian Zone Group B.

• Qualifying results:

First round		
Oman	0	Japan 1
Macao	0	Japan 10
Nepal	0	Japan 6
Japan	10	Macao 0
Japan	3	Nepal 0
Japan	1	Oman 1

• Second round Group B

Japan	6	Uzbekistan 3
UAE	0	Japan 10
Japan	1	South Korea 2
Kazakhstan	1	Japan 1
Uzbekistan	1	Japan 1
Japan	1	UAE 1
South Korea	0	Japan 2
Japan	5	Kazakhstan 1

• Play-off

Japan	3	Iran 2
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• Fixtures:

Early 1998: South Korea v Japan

March 1998: hosting Dynasty Cup in Yokohama v South Korea.

China, Hong Kong.

May 1998: hosting triangular Kirin Cup.

NORWAY

• Population: 4,370,000
• Area: 385,639 sq km
• Capital: Oslo
• Federation: Norges Fotballforbund founded in 1902.

• Colours: Red jersey, white shorts, blue socks.
• World Cup record: 3rd appearance (1938, 94, 98)
• European Championships record: No appearances in finals.

How they qualified: Finished 1st in European Zone Group 3.

• Qualifying results:

Norway	5	Azerbaijan 0
Norway	3	Hungary 0
Switzerland	0	Norway 1
Norway	1	Finland 1

Hungary	1	Norway 1
Finland	0	Norway 4
Azerbaijan	0	Norway 1
Norway	5	Switzerland 0

• Fixtures:
February, 25, 1998: France v Norway
March 25, 1998: Belgium v Norway
April 22, 1998: Denmark v Norway
May 28, 1998: Norway v Sweden

ROMANIA

• Population: 23,240,000
• Area: 237,500 sq km
• Capital: Bucharest
• Federation: Federatia Romana de Fotbal founded in 1908.

• Colours: Yellow jersey, blue shorts, red socks.
• World Cup record: 7th appearance (1930, 34, 38, 70, 90, 94, 98).

• Quarter-finalists 1994.

• European Championship record: 3 appearances (1972, 84, 96).

• How they qualified: Finished 1st in European Zone Group 8.

• Qualifying results:

Romania	3	Lithuania 0
Iceland	0	Romania 4
Macedonia	0	Romania 3
Romania	8	Liechtenstein 0
Lithuania	0	Romania 1
Romania	1	R. of Ireland 0
Romania	4	Macedonia 2
Liechtenstein	1	Romania 8
Romania	4	Iceland 0
R. of Ireland	1	Romania 1

NIGERIA

• Population: 95,000,000
• Area: 923,770 sq km
• Capital: Abuja
• Federation: Nigeria Football Association founded in 1945.

• Colours: Green jersey, white shorts, green socks.
• World Cup record: 2nd appearance (1994, 98).
• African Nations Cup record: Winners 1980, 94.

• How they qualified: Finished 1st in African Zone Group 1.

• Qualifying results:

Nigeria	2	Burkina Faso 1
Kenya	1	Nigeria 1
Nigeria	2	Guinea 1
Burkina Faso	1	Nigeria 2
Nigeria	3	Kenya 0
Guinea	1	Nigeria 0

• Fixtures:

April 22, 1998: Germany v Nigeria

MOROCCO

• Population: 26,000,000
• Area: 710,800 sq km

• Capital: Rabat
• Federation: Royal Moroccan Football Federation founded in 1955.

• Colours: Red jersey, green shorts, red socks.

• World Cup record: 4th appearance (1970, 86, 94, 98).

• African Nations Cup record: Winners 1976.

• How they qualified: Finished 1st in African Zone Group 5.

• Qualifying results:

Morocco	4	Sierra Leone 0
Ghana	2	Morocco 2
Gabon	0	Morocco 4
Sierra Leone	0	Morocco 1
Morocco	1	Ghana 0
Morocco	2	Gabon 0

• Fixtures:

December 24, 1997: Morocco v Congo

February 4, 1998: Morocco v Wales

March or April 1998: Morocco v Brazil

May 1998: host of Hassan II tournament v France, Croatia and Belgium

MEXICO

• Population: 90,000,000
• Area: 1,969,367 sq km
• Capital: Mexico City
• Federation: Federacion Mexicana de Futbol founded in 1927.

• Colours: Green jersey, white shorts, red socks.

• World Cup record: 11th appearance (1930, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 70, 78, 86, 94, 98).

• CONCACAF (Gold Cup) record: Winners 1965, 71, 77, 93, 96.

• How they qualified: Finished 1st in CONCACAF Zone.

• Qualifying results: Zone semi-finals.

St Vincent and the Grenadines 0 Mexico 3

Honduras 2 Mexico 1

Mexico 5 St Vincent, Grenadines 1

Mexico 3 Honduras 1

Jamaica 1 Mexico 0

• Final Group

Mexico 4 Canada 0

Costa Rica 0 Mexico 0

Mexico 6 Jamaica 0

USA 2 Mexico 2

Mexico 5 El Salvador 0

Canada 2 Mexico 2

Mexico 0 USA 0

Mexico 3 Costa Rica 3

Jamaica 0 Mexico 0

• Fixtures: December 12-21, 1997.

Confederation Cup in Riyadh including Dec 12 v Saudi Arabia, Dec 14 v Australia, Dec 16 v Brazil.

January 27, 1998: Mexico v Denmark

February 1-15, 1998 CONCACAF Gold Cup in USA including Feb 4 v Trinidad and Tobago, Feb 7 v Honduras.

CINEMA	TEL: 674141	CINEMA	TEL: 674142	CINEMA	TEL: 674143	CINEMA	TEL: 674144	CINEMA	TEL: 674145
PHILADELPHIA "1"	PHILADELPHIA "2"	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 1	GALLERIA 2	Hisham Yunes Theatre			
Chris O'Donnell & Jene Hackman ... in	Charles Grodin ... in	Nour Al Sharif & Layla Alwi ... in	Rowan Atkinson ... in	ABDOUN	ABDOUN	THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE			
THE CHAMBER	BEETHOVEN'S 2ND	AL MASEER (Arabic)	MR. BEAN	Nour Al Sharif & Layla Alwi ... in	NOTHING TO LOSE	Starring Hisham Yunes and Amal Dabbas			
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:45	Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30				
	THE BEAUTICIAN & THE BEAST	Winner in the 1997 Cannes festival	SLEEP WALKERS	Winner in the 1997 Cannes festival					
	Shows: 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 3:30, 6:00 only						

Sports

Jordan Open Table Tennis

Zeina Shaban

Champion

Under 13

1. Zeina Shaban

2. Hadeed

3. Ghada

Under 15

1. Rashid

2. Ahmed

3. Bura

Under 17

1. Hana

2. Lina

3. Maha

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Philadelphia 44

New England 20

New Orleans 16

Buffalo 20

St. Louis 23

Kansas City 44

Atlanta 24

Miami 34

Pittsburgh 26

Tampa Bay 20

Denver 38

San

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Jordan Open Table Tennis Championships Zeina Shaban takes U-14 title

By Omar Karmi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Nine-year-old table tennis prodigy Zeina Shaban won the Under-14 girls title at the Jordan Open Table Tennis Championships Monday, but failed to add the Under-17's title to her name.

Organised by the Jordan Table Tennis Federation, the 6-day championship concluded yesterday at the Hussein Youth City.

Having gone into the final day with two victories under her belt, notably against arch-rival Lina Majdalawi, and leading the field, Zeina surprisingly lost to Ghadeer Awwad, before narrowly losing out to Ghadeer's sister, Hadeel, in a tense 27-25 final set.

Lina Majdalawi went on to win overall. Despite this, Zeina became, according to the president of the table tennis federation, Dr. Ismat Al Kurdi, the youngest ever champion.

The event, he claimed, was a good show-case for

Championship results

Under 14 girls:

1. Zeina Shaban
2. Hadeel Awwad
3. Ghadeer Awwad

Under 14 boys:

1. Rashed Al Momani
2. Ahmed Awwad
3. Bura'a Abu Ganmi

Under 17 girls:

1. Lina Majdalawi
2. Hadeel Awwad
3. Ghadeer Awwad

Under 21 women:

1. Hanadi Tufaha
2. Lina Majdalawi
3. Maha Hawatneh

Under 21 men:

1. Ayman Maknay
2. Shawqi Dia
3. Abed Al Shama'

Under 25 women:

1. Alia Tufaha
2. Hanadi Tufaha
3. Amani Tufaha

Under 25 men:

1. Iyad Maknay
2. Wael Sawalha
3. Ayman Maknay

Over 25 women:

1. Tiryana Al Najjar
2. Alia Tufaha
3. Haifa Al Ashkar

the younger players, who eventually will spearhead Jordan's Olympic ambitions. Dr. Kurdi is also the secretary general of the Jordan Olympic Committee.

Although the federation has organised championships in the past, it was the first time that age classifications were used. This practice is more in line with international standards, and

it was with this in mind that the federation decided to introduce age-groups.

The winner of each group will automatically qualify for the national team.

In other results, Iyad Maknay won the prestigious under-25 men's group while Alia Tufaha won the women's equivalent.

Oakland Raiders wide receiver Tim Brown (L) can't get his fingers on the ball as he is closely pursued by Miami Dolphins cornerback Sam Madison (R) late in the first half at the Oakland Coliseum. The Dolphins are fighting for a play-off berth (Reuters photo)



NFL RESULTS

Jacksonville	29	Baltimore	27
Philadelphia	44	Cincinnati	42
New England	20	Indianapolis	17
New Orleans	16	Carolina	13
Buffalo	20	New York Jets	10
St. Louis	23	Washington	20
Kansas City	44	San Francisco	9
Atlanta	24	Seattle	17
Miami	34	Oakland	16
Pittsburgh	26	Arizona	20
Tampa Bay	20	NY Giants	8
Denver	38	San Diego	28

OT

United go three points clear

LONDON (AFP) — Norwegian ace Ole Gunnar Solskjaer struck twice as Manchester United went three points clear at the top of the English Premiership with a crushing 4-0 victory over 10-man Blackburn on Sunday.

Liverpool, meanwhile, bounced back from last week's humiliating 1-0 home defeat by Barnsley to clinch a 1-0 win over Arsenal at Highbury, courtesy of a stunning second-half goal by England star Steve McManaman.

In the day's other Premiership match, Liverpool had acting captain McManaman to thank for a vital victory that will go some way to silencing their growing band of critics after a series of surprise defeats.

The 25-year-old forward broke the deadlock when he casually picked up a throw-in on the left flank and sauntered towards the Arsenal area before unleashing a powerful dipping shot into the far corner of the net.

The Gunners had the best of the opening exchanges and came close to scoring after 10 minutes when Marc Overmars broke into the right of the Liverpool box.

The Dutch winger fired over a dangerous cross

which just eluded the head of Ian Wright before falling to Stephen Hughes who fired a powerful shot over the bar.

Teenager Michael Owen and McManaman were posing Liverpool's greatest threat, but the Merseysiders were missing the influence of the banned Paul Ince and the cutting edge of Robbie Fowler, also under suspension.

Arsenal had another chance to open the scoring when England defender Tony Adams headed across goal and just beyond the far post after Martin Keown flicked on Winterburn's

cross.

Liverpool, though, began to impose themselves towards the end of the first period with Jamie Redknapp and McManaman hitting their passing targets.

Roy Evans' side came close to stretching their lead 15 minutes from time when Norwegian midfielder Oyvind Leonhardsen struck a fierce drive from the edge of the area which Arsenal 'keeper David Seaman did well to tip over.

REQUEST FOR OFFERS

The "Water Quality Improvement and Conservation" Project, Ministry of Water and Irrigation invites qualified Jordanian firms to submit expressions of interest to produce an educational film. The Project has a Public Awareness Component which promotes educational information on the benefits and effects of water conservation. A firm will be contracted to produce a 10 to 15 minute video, in Arabic, which will be used in workshops, seminars, and lectures. The video must be produced in a format which may be shown on national television.

Interested firms should submit an expression of interest including price quotations to the WQIC Project Assistant, room 215, 2nd floor Ministry of Water and Irrigation Building in Shmeissani by December 4th, 1997.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

South African final drawn

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Kaizer Chiefs and Sundowns drew 1-1 after extra time in a South African League Cup final watched by a 60,000 crowd at FNB Stadium this weekend. Midfielder Thabang Lebeshe headed Chiefs in front from an 81st-minute corner and Nigerian striker Raphael Chukwu levelled within 60 seconds through a close-range shot. The replay will be on Wednesday night at the same venue with the clubs chasing a first prize of \$200,000, a record for a domestic cup in Africa.

U.S. to host basketball champs

MUNICH (AFP) — The executive committee of FIBA, basketball's ruling body, announced here on Sunday that the 2002 Men's World Championships would be hosted by the United States while China would host the women's event. The United States, who have never hosted the event before despite inventing the game, will use the 32,000-seater RCA Dome and the 18,000-seater Fieldhouse Arena in Indianapolis for the tournament which will be held in the first two weeks of September. The women's championships will run from May 26 to June 6 in the towns of Suzhou and Changshou in Jiangsu province with the final in Nanjing. The executive committee also finalised the dates for the basketball tournament at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney — it will be from September 16 to October 1.

Ghanaian international dies

ACCRA (AFP) — Ghanaian international midfielder Shamo Quayee died here suddenly over the weekend during a holiday from his Swedish club, Umea. His family told AFP on Monday. Quayee was pronounced dead on arrival Sunday at a private hospital in Tema, near Accra, where he was rushed after complaining of a sore throat. After playing a friendly game on Friday, Quayee suffered a slight swelling on the bridge of the nose, a family spokesman said. He said Shamo later developed a lump on the cheek and on Sunday morning complained of a sore throat and was rushed to hospital where he was pronounced dead on arrival. Quayee attained instant stardom in 1986 as the most famous member of a youthful Hearts of Oak squad recruited to replace 23 sacked senior players. He played for Ghana's Under-20 and Under-23 teams and in the African country's bronze medal-winning squad at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona. Between 1993 and 1995 Quayee played with Saudi Arabian club Al-Qadisiyah before joining Umea in Sweden in 1996. Quayee had recently been picked for Ghana's national squad, the Black Stars, in next year's African Cup of Nations in Burkina Faso.

Hawks cruise past Spurs; Sonics beat Magic 103-81

ATLANTA (AP) — Dikembe Mutombo scored 22 points and the Atlanta Hawks, shooting a season-high 57 per cent from the field, cruised past the San Antonio Spurs 108-96 Sunday night for their franchise-record 13th victory of the season.

Atlanta, eclipsing its previous record of 12 victories for the month, has won three in a row to improve its NBA-best record to 14-2.

Led by Mutombo's 10-of-12 performance from the field, the Hawks made 45 of 79 shots to beat their previous season high of 56 per cent in an opening-night victory at Orlando. Christian Laettner added 18 points, Steve Smith 15 and Tyrone Corbin 14.

David Robinson scored 23 points to lead the Spurs, and rookie Tim Duncan added 20.

Pacers 101, 76ers 89: At Indianapolis, Rik Smits has season-highs of 25 points and five blocked shots and Mark Jackson had a season-high 14 assists as Indiana defeated Philadelphia.

Both teams had five players in double figures. Jerry Stackhouse was high scorer for the 76ers with 21.

Indiana had its most productive period of the season when it scored 33 points in the third quarter to build a 22-point advantage.

Jalen Rose also had a season high for the Pacers, scoring 11 of his 17 points in the fourth quarter when Indiana fought off a late charge.

Grizzlies 97, Pistons 95: At Auburn Hills, Michigan, Vancouver completed a sweep of the season series against struggling Detroit when Grant Hill missed two foul shots with 2.1 seconds left.

Antonio Daniels hit a short running jumper with 3.1 seconds left to break a tie, and Shareef Abdur-Rahim then fouled Hill on the inbounds pass, but Hill missed the first free throw, and no one could gain control after he intentionally missed the second.

The win was just Vancouver's second in 11 road games this year.

Detroit lost for the 11th time in its last 15 games.

Detroit (6-11), which has the fourth-worst record in the Eastern Conference, had never lost to the Grizzlies prior to this season.

Supersonics 103, Magic 81: At Seattle, Vin Baker scored all 21 of his points in the first half as Seattle built a big early lead and rolled to its seventh straight victory.

The Magic had won seven of their previous eight games, but the Sonics dominated and led by 20 points midway through the second period. Orlando cut its deficit to single digits only once the rest of the way.

Hersey Hawkins had 16 points and seven rebounds and Dale Ellis had 13 points. Derek Strong led Orlando with 15 points.

Nets 87, Kings 73: At Sacramento, California,

Kendall Gill scored 18 of his 26 points in the first half as New Jersey built an early lead and coasted.

The Nets (10-5), who began the season with four straight victories, moved into a first-place tie with Miami and New York atop the Atlantic Division.

Kerry Kinles finished with 18 points for the Nets, who forced 21 turnovers that led to 24 points. Sam Cassell had 10 points and 11 assists.

Mitch Richmond led Sacramento with 16 points. Billy Owens had 13 points and 16 rebounds.

Lakers 105, Raptors 99: At Inglewood, California, Eddie Jones scored 11 of his 32 points in the first quarter as Los Angeles started fast before having to hold off Toronto.

The Lakers remained the only NBA team without a home loss. The Raptors dropped their 13th straight — the longest losing streak in the league so far this season — as their NBA-worst record fell to 1-15.

Nick Van Exel had 17 points and 10 assists, and Rick Fox also scored 17 for Los Angeles.

John Wallace led the Raptors with 25 points — the fifth straight game he has scored 20 or more.

Amman Baccalaureate School

invites applications for posts starting in August 1998 in the following subject areas:

- Arabic teachers for Junior, Middle and Senior Schools.
- English teachers for the Middle and Senior Schools, with experience of teaching literature.
- Economics & Business Studies teacher for the Senior School.
- Mathematics teachers for the Middle and Senior Schools.
- Information Technology teacher for the Senior School.
- Physical Education teacher.

Only graduates with qualifications in the subject area and preferably a teaching diploma will be considered for these posts. Preference will be given to native speakers of Arabic and English and to bilingual candidates for other posts.

Application forms, are available from the School Receptionist (Tel: 5411191) and must be submitted together with a recent photograph by Saturday 06 December 1997

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Palestinian injured after Israeli soldiers hit school with bullets, tear gas

Another Palestinian home demolished

NABLUS (AFP) — Israeli soldiers injured one Palestinian when they fired rubber-coated bullets and tear gas at a school in a village outside the West Bank town of Nablus on Monday, witnesses said.

In a separate incident, soldiers fired tear gas at Palestinians who were protesting as the army demolished a Palestinian home under construction outside a nearby Jewish settlement.

In the village of Bita, four kilometers outside Nablus, soldiers fired tear gas at a boys' high school while classes were in session, saying they had been hit by

stones thrown from near the school.

One student was taken to hospital in "stable condition" after being hit by a bullet, while another was taken to hospital after being overcome by gas.

Meanwhile, in the nearby village of Burin, two bulldozers accompanied by a contingent of 15 army jeeps demolished the home of Rustum Abdul Aziz, which lay near the settlement of Berakha, witnesses said.

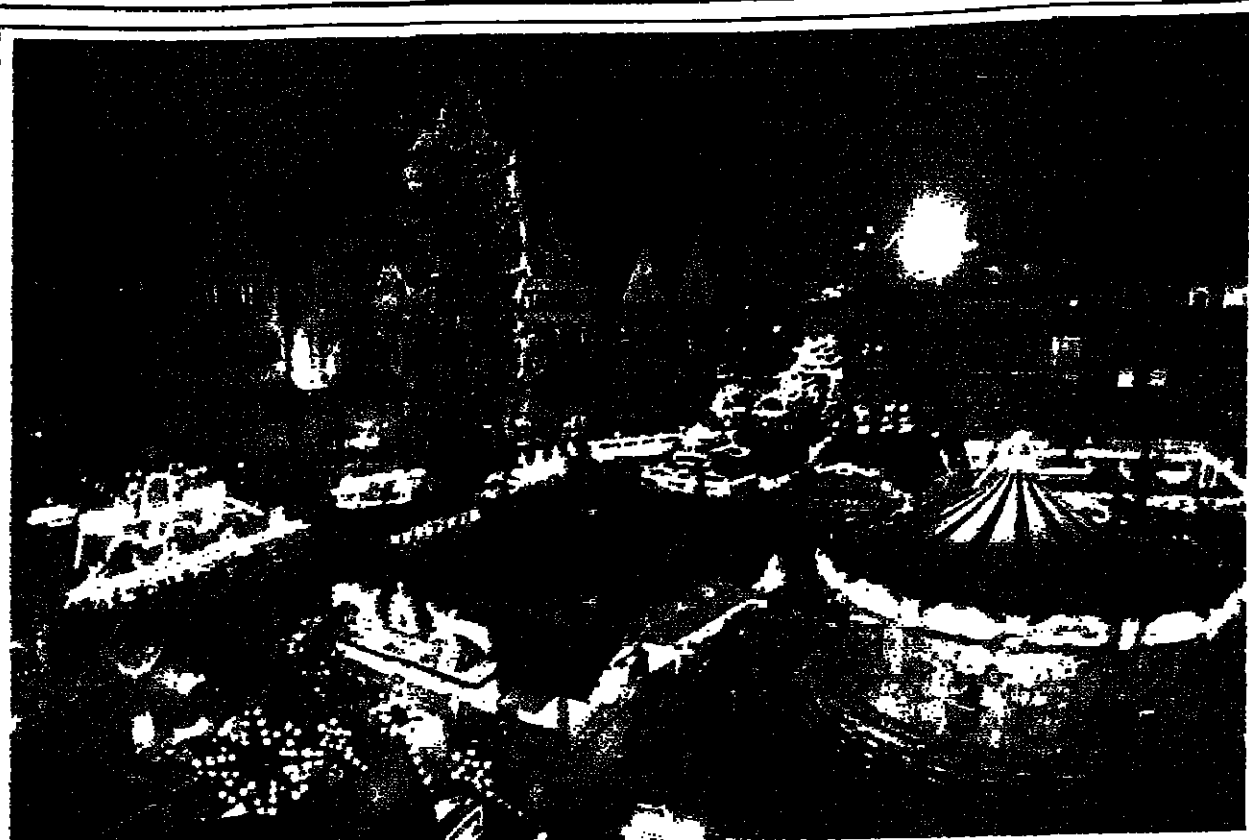
A crowd of Palestinians gathered and verbal arguments broke out with the soldiers. When a few youths threw stones at the soldiers,

the troops opened fire with tear gas to disperse the crowd. No injuries were reported.

The army said that Abdul Aziz's home had been built "illegally."

The army frequently demolishes Palestinian homes that are built without construction permits, particularly if they lie near Jewish settlements or the by-pass roads which serve them.

The Palestinians counter that Israeli occupation authorities almost never give permits to Palestinians to build on land in the 70 per cent of the West Bank which lies under their control.



CHRISTMAS SPIRIT IN GERMANY: Seasonal decorated huts, carousels and illuminated market stands crowd the Roemerberg Square in central Frankfurt where this year's traditional Frankfurt Christmas Market was opened. Until 22nd of December, about 200 Christmas market stands on this square, the famous 'Zeil' shopping street and the Main river banks will attract an estimated three million visitors (AFP photo)

Palestinians dismiss Israeli troop withdrawal plan as 'smoke-screen'

RAMALLAH (AFP) — The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) dismissed Monday an Israeli decision in principle to conduct a limited, conditional West Bank troop withdrawal as a "smoke-screen."

This Israeli decision "is merely smoke in the eyes, a manoeuvre just to reduce the international efforts, especially by the Americans and Europeans, and ease the increasing reactions against its policies," said presidential secretary, Tayeb Abdul Rahim.

"Israel must implement the three phases of the troop redeployments by the letter and content of the [January] Hebron accord," Mr. Abdul Rahim told Agence France Presse (AFP).

The Israeli government on Sunday agreed in principle to conduct a long-promised troop withdrawal from parts of the West Bank.

But the decision did not define the amount of land to be transferred to Palestinian control nor set a timetable for the troop withdrawals, and imposed the condition that the Palestinians show a stiffer fight against Islamists before

any withdrawals take place.

"With this decision, Netanyahu isn't just trying to get out of implementing his commitments, he is trying to eliminate the foundation on which the entire peace process is based, the principle of land for peace," Mr. Abdul Rahim said.

He accused Mr. Netanyahu of taking "unilateral actions to strengthen Israeli occupation" and to "cover up Israel's policies of expanding settlements and stealing Palestinian land."

Under the January Hebron accord, Israel was to conduct a three-stage troop withdrawal in the West Bank by mid-1998. The Palestinians say that based on earlier accords, the withdrawal should give them control over 90 per cent of the West Bank.

Israeli officials have said that under Mr. Netanyahu's proposal, the first and second phases would be combined into one troop withdrawal and the Palestinians would have to forgo the third stage.

Although the extent of the withdrawal has not yet been determined, Mr. Netanyahu has floated a proposal which would put around a third of the West Bank under total

Egypt rejects Israeli pull back proposal

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt on Monday joined the Palestinians in rejecting Israel's decision to pull back troops from the West Bank, saying the conditional offer will further complicate the deadlocked peace process.

Foreign Minister Amr Musa said that Sunday's decision by the Israeli cabinet was merely "tactical" and did not address the Palestinians' grievances.

"What we heard is an Israeli decision that will not push the peace process forward but, rather, will create more complications," Mr. Musa said.

"It will not help," he told reporters after meeting with Israeli envoy Eitan Bentsur who briefed him on the cabinet's decision to pull back troops in the West Bank.

Meanwhile, Israeli Cabinet Secretary Danny Naveh and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's adviser, Uzi Arad, also travelled to Egypt Monday and met with Osama Al Baz, the political adviser to President Hosni Mubarak.

The visit was part of Israel's efforts to convince Egypt to accept the decision — and, perhaps, to help convince the Palestinians to do so, too. After the meeting at a hotel near the airport, Mr. Naveh said: "We will continue our consultations with the Egyptian side, especially with Dr. Baz, so that we can find a way to push the peace process forward." He then left for Israel.

control of the PNA.

Mr. Abdul Rahim called on the United States, which issued letters of guarantee to ensure implementation of the Hebron accord, to "take up its responsibilities" over the

troop withdrawals.

He warned that Mr. Netanyahu's "policies of stalling and evasiveness represent a serious threat to the peace process."

Probe panel slams Israeli agency for murder attempt on Misha'al

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A parliamentary commission of enquiry said Monday that it had found "serious failures" in the operations of Israel's foreign intelligence service surrounding the assassination attempt against a Palestinian Islamist leader in Jordan.

But the panel's final report stopped short of seeking sanctions against officials of the agency, known as the Mossad, involved in planning the murder of Khaled Misha'al, political chief of Hamas.

Uzi Landau, chairman of the Knesset subcommittee on intelligence, said his group had "uncovered serious failures on the part of Mossad" concerning the planning and execution of clandestine operations.

He said a preliminary report drafted by his six-member committee called for "major reforms" in the Mossad but did not recommend sanctions against agency officials responsible for the Misha'al fiasco.

The report was approved by five of the six committee members. Yossi Sarid of the left-wing Meretz party rejected the committee conclusions, saying that Mossad officials should be punished over the Misha'al affair.

Two Mossad agents were captured after attacking Mr. Misha'al with an exotic poison on an Amman street on Sept. 25.

To obtain the agents' release and prevent a breakdown in Israeli-Jordanian relations, Israel was forced to provide an antidote to save Mr. Misha'al and to free several dozen Jordanian and Palestinian detainees, notably Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas.

Opposition politicians had demanded a high-level state enquiry into the decision to try to assassinate Mr. Misha'al in Jordan in apparent violation of a 1994 Israeli-Jordan peace treaty.

But this was rejected by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has formal

responsibility for Mossad and its domestic counterpart, Shin Beth.

Instead, Mr. Netanyahu named an ad hoc "clarification committee" to look into the affair.

According to leaks of testimony to that committee and the parliamentary panel, Mossad Chief Danny Yatom said the order to assassinate Mr. Misha'al came directly from Mr. Netanyahu following Hamas suicide bombings in Jerusalem.

Mr. Yatom reportedly attributed the mission's failure to a decision by a senior Mossad field agent to go ahead with the attack on Mr. Misha'al even though the conditions at the time were not right.

The two agents who carried out the attack were spotted by one of Mr. Misha'al's bodyguards who took chase and battled with the Israelis in the street until a passing policeman came by and arrested them.

Syrian defence minister says Turkey 'joined enemy ranks'

CAIRO (AFP) — Syrian Defence Minister Mustafa Tlass on Monday accused Turkey of having joined the ranks of the Arabs' enemies because of Ankara's relations with Israel, according to an Egyptian newspaper.

"Turkey turned its back on the Arabs and instead of considering them its natural friends, Turkey has joined enemy ranks," by reaching an alliance with Israel, Mr. Tlass told the Egyptian government daily Al-Ahram.

"The presence of Turkish troops in parts of northern Iraq is a fruit of this alliance and reflects Ankara's desire to set up a security zone to facilitate any [future] attempt to occupy oil wells in northern Iraq," Mr. Tlass said.

"This presence is also aimed at putting pressure on Syria at a time when Israel wants to maintain its occupation of the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon to control land and water resources," Mr. Tlass added.

In February 1996, Israel and Turkey signed a military cooperation agreement which triggered a wave of concern across the Arab World.

Mr. Tlass said that relations between Ankara and Tel Aviv would also raise concern in Iran.

"The strengthening of military capabilities in Iran is in the interest of the Arab Nation because Iran is a friendly country which plays an important role to counter Zionism," Mr. Tlass said.

Mr. Tlass also called on the Arab countries to set up "a regional security zone," which he said would constitute "a guarantee for the strength of the Arabs."

Turning to the Arab-Israeli conflict he said he did not expect a peaceful solution soon.

"I only see one possibility: the pursuit of the Arab-Israeli conflict because there are no signs of a change in Israel or a change in U.S. policies," Mr. Tlass said.

"The [Israeli] government is bolstering hostile attitudes towards peace... and the United States, instead of putting pressure on Israel are putting pressure on the Arabs," Mr. Tlass said.

Somali faction leaders agree on reconciliation meeting

CAIRO (AFP) — Somali warlords Monday announced plans to hold a national reconciliation meeting in Somalia later this month to set up a government for their embattled country.

The national reconciliation meeting is to be held on Dec. 20 in the town of Baydhabo, they said in a statement released here.

"The participants of the Cairo Somali meeting, after concerted efforts and brotherly consultations, have unanimously agreed to hold a national reconciliation meeting on Dec. 20 in Baydhabo," the statement said.

The statement was signed by Osman Hassan Ali, known as Atto, the current chairman of the 26-faction Somali National Salvation Council (NSC) and key warlord Hussein Muhammad Aided of the United

Congress/Somali National Alliance (USC/NSA).

The Somali factions, along with Ali Mahdi Aided Mohammad of the NSC-allied Somali Salvation Alliance, have been huddled in a former Egyptian army barracks in Cairo since Nov. 25 to hammer out an agreement on a government for their strife-torn country.

"Somali faction leaders are still meeting here to finalise preparations for this meeting which was agreed upon on Sunday," a Somali source close to Mr. Ali Mahdi told AFP.

"Once they have finished their work a final declaration will be announced by the Egyptian foreign ministry," which is hosting the reconciliation meeting that opened in Cairo on Nov. 12, the source added.

Somali sources last week said the participants at the closed-door talks agreed on the creation of a 13-member Somali presidential council, transitional government, a parliament and a legal system and decided that a president for Somalia would be chosen at the broader national reconciliation meeting.

Somalia has been without a government since the overthrow of dictator Mohammad Siad Barre in 1991 and the country has been ruled by warlords for the past six years.

"They are now meeting to fine-tune this agreement but they have not yet reached a date and venue for a broader reconciliation meeting during which a president for a united Somalia will be elected," one of the participants in the talks said last week.

Palestinian in Israeli jail ends 40-day hunger strike

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — A Palestinian woman jailed in Israel on Sunday ended a 40-day hunger strike she launched in an effort to secure her release, Israeli officials said.

"The administrative detainee Itaf Alayan is now eating dinner and with this has stopped her ongoing hunger strike," a spokeswoman for Israel's prison service said in a statement.

Ms. Alayan is close to the Islamist Jihad group, which has claimed responsibility for deadly attacks against Israelis.

"She stopped as part of a deal that Israel release her after her administrative deten-

tion, without renewing it," said Muhammad Al Hindi of the Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip told Reuters.

"The deal came as a result of her strong will which in the end won the battle against the Israelis. It was the first hunger strike carried out for such a long period of time by one person," Mr. Al Hindi said.

The Islamic Jihad had warned Israel that it would retaliate if any harm were done to Ms. Alayan.

Ms. Alayan's mother, Sabha, told Reuters: "Palestinian Authority officials told me that Itaf stopped her hunger strike."

Ms. Alayan, who was sentenced to 14 years in jail in 1987 for attempting to carry out an attack against Israeli guards, was released in February 1996 with 30 woman prisoners in line with interim peace deals.

She was rearrested last month and placed in administrative detention under Israeli laws that allow suspects to be held without charges or trial for months.

According to Israeli figures, there are 3,648 Palestinian political prisoners still in Israeli jails.

PNA officials said there are more than 850 Palestinians in administrative detention.

Women cry foul at Turkish census for not tallying their professions

ANKARA (AP) — Women's groups and women politicians on Monday denounced a census for ignoring professional women.

Turks were ordered to stay home for 14 hours Sunday while census officials went door-to-door. But the form used had only one profession slot for each household, and it was reserved for the husband.

"They did not ask me my profession," said State Minister Islay Saygin, in charge of family affairs. "According to the civil code, the man is still the head of the household. We should be ashamed of this."

It appeared that Ms. Saygin and other female officials of the government were not aware of the census forms beforehand.

The state Institute of Statistics, which prepared the forms, defended its omission by saying it was trying to save on paperwork.

"This attitude shows that women won't be able to break out of their lives as second class citizens," said Tansu Tuglar, president of the Women's Defence Society.

Women take part in most aspects of this predominantly Muslim but officially secular society, serving as judges, doctors, lawyers, governors and industrialists. Turkey even had a woman prime minister, Tansu Ciller, between 1993-96.



Birthday card delivered... 68 years late

DUBLIN (AFP) — An 87-year-old Irish Catholic nun briefly felt like a teenager again when a card offering best wishes for her 19th birthday was delivered last week, 68 years late. Sister Cecilia was sent the card in 1929 when she was living in Crosshaven, County Cork, by her friend Eileen Lovely from Dublin. The card became lodged under the floorboards of a local post office and was only discovered when workmen began demolishing the building. "It was like a message from my youth, bringing so many happy memories of the past and the dear friend who sent it," said Sister Cecilia.

Fayed accused of bugging staff

LONDON (AFP) — The owner of London's Harrods luxury department store, Mohammad Fayed, secretly bugged his staff over a six year period, a newspaper said, quoting the store's former head of security. The paper said it had obtained hundreds of hours of tapes, including conversations with customers, relatives and even members of the royal family. It alleged information gained from the intimate conversations sometimes led to sackings or redundancies. But in a statement, Fayed's spokesman denied that the millionaire had eavesdropped on his employees and blamed the allegations on "a discredited and disgruntled" former member of staff.

Sweden's Princess Madeleine in Spice Girls coup

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Sweden's 15-year old Princess Madeleine fooled a crowd of 10,000 people attending the Stockholm International Horse Show on Sunday, appearing secretly as Spice Girl Mel B in a show with four other girls, according to press reports. The blonde-haired, blue-eyed princess took part in a masquerade competition at the Globe Arena without anyone in the audience aware that she was posing as racy Mel B. Announcers only introduced her as "Madeleine," a common nickname for the princess, as the five girls rode in on horses, dismounted and performed a dance number to a medley of Spice Girls songs.

Moths didn't like Rommel's epaulettes

CAEN (AFP) — The son of World War II General Erwin Rommel donated his father's epaulettes to the Peace Memorial in this Normandy city. "My father was wearing these epaulettes when he was wounded on July 17, 1944, at Lisieux, Normandy," said Manfred Rommel, who was taking part in a peace conference here. "I had to rummage through my things to find them. The uniform had been eaten by moths, but they didn't like the epaulettes," added Rommel, an official for Franco-German cooperation at the German foreign ministry.

Madonna refuses to sing oldies

NEW YORK (AFP) — Madonna has refused to sing at a gala event in honour of the late Italian fashion king Gianni Versace apparently because she lacks new material. The singer turned down an invitation to perform Dec. 8 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute Ball in honour of Versace because she did not want to sing any of her oldies. The organisers of the gala event also tried to get singers Whitney Houston, Courtney Love and soul singer D'Angelo before Sting came through.

Crown Prince to lead delegation to OIC summit
His Royal Highness Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud will lead the Saudi delegation to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) summit in Jakarta, Indonesia, on Dec. 9 and 11. Minister of State for Islamic Affairs, Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, will also lead a Saudi delegation to the summit. The Saudi delegation will include Crown Prince Abdullah, Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, and other members of the royal family. The summit will be held in Jakarta, Indonesia, on Dec. 9 and 11. The OIC is an international organization of Muslim-majority countries and territories. It was founded in 1969 and has 57 member states. The summit is an important event for the OIC and its member states. It provides a platform for member states to discuss issues of common interest and to coordinate their efforts in various fields. The summit is also an opportunity for member states to strengthen their ties and to promote cooperation and solidarity among them. The Saudi delegation is expected to play a leading role in the summit. Crown Prince Abdullah is a prominent figure in the Saudi royal family and is known for his active role in international affairs. He is also a member of the OIC's Council of Cooperation. The Saudi delegation's participation in the summit is seen as a sign of Saudi Arabia's commitment to the OIC and its member states.

Majali should 'd...
The article discusses the political situation in Jordan and the role of the Prime Minister, Mr. Ali Majali. It mentions that Mr. Majali has been accused of bugging his staff and that he has been accused of eavesdropping on his employees. The article also mentions that Mr. Majali has been accused of being involved in the assassination attempt on Khaled Misha'al. The article suggests that Mr. Majali should be held accountable for his actions and that he should be removed from office. The article also mentions that the Jordanian people are demanding a change in government and that they are calling for a new Prime Minister. The article concludes by saying that the Jordanian people have the right to demand a change in government and that they should be supported in their efforts to do so.

Israel must 'soberly...
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